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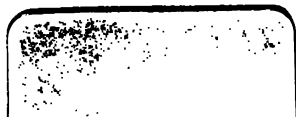
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APOSTOLICAL PREACHING  
CONSIDERED  
IN A  
FAREWELL DISCOURSE,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 1836,  
IN CAMDEN CHAPEL, ST. PANCRAS,

BY THE  
REV. A. C. L. D'ARBLAY, M.A.  
FELLOW OF CHRIST COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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1836.

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TO THE  
CONGREGATION OF CAMDEN CHAPEL.

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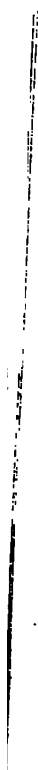
FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

In presenting to you this very imperfect discourse, I beg to thank you, not only for the kind manner in which you requested its publication, and without which it would not have seen the light, but still more for the strong marks of feeling, and of interest, which were so generally manifested when the sermon was delivered. Wherever my future lot may be, the remembrance of that day will be one of the most soothing recollections of

Your friend, and late minister,

A. D'ARBLAY.

March 29, 1836.



## ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON.

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Contrast between the early and the late history of the Church. Brief review of the book of Acts ; chiefly valuable for its account of the wonderful march of Christianity.—By what means, under Providence, was this effected ?—The preaching of the Apostles considered.—Paul's farewell address to the Ephesians.—Subjects open to the Christian preacher.—His duty to declare, equally and fearlessly, all the oracles of God.—The different parts of the Bible contain specimens of every variety of style, but its doctrines never vary.—Danger of exhibiting those doctrines under partial points of view.—The counsel of God, according to the law of nature.—The counsel of God, according to the law of revelation.—*Three* essential doctrines in Scripture : the doctrine of the *fall*, the doctrine of the *cross*, the doctrine of the *Spirit*.—The *fall* proved by experience, as well as Scripture.—The *degree* of natural depravity an immaterial point of dispute, since, at all events, it is such as to forfeit all our natural claims to Heaven.—The *atonement* both *necessary* and *sufficient*, but not as a cloak for sin.—The power of the Spirit supplying the inability of the natural man to obey the law.—Its influence now shown, not in miraculous gifts, but in treasures of ordinary grace.—Reply to those who assert, that this is not preaching the Gospel.—General exhortation to *religious toleration*.—Distinction between *toleration* and *indifference*, illustrated by the example of Christ.—Farewell address.



“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall *add unto* these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall *take away from* the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”—Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

A

## S E R M O N ,

&c.

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ACTS xx. 27.

For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God.

To the pious mind, no history is so fraught with interest as that of the primitive Church of Christ, while the spirit of its founder was still visible among his followers, and the elect yet retained some fragments of the mantle of the departed God. This spirit did not, alas! continue long unbroken : the stream became less pure, as it flowed further from the fountain. Pride, vanity, selfishness, ambition,—all those grovelling passions, which Christianity was intended to extirpate, gradually resumed their empire over its votaries ; and when the first perils of persecution had subsided, greater perils arose from dissensions among themselves. The Church history, soon after the first century, too

well justifies the strong complaint of Bishop Heber, that “as the world grew Christian, Christianity grew worldly.” The mind, disgusted by the scenes of hypocrisy which her later annals disclose, is relieved by turning back to that delightful book, which, deriving its name from the *Acts of the Apostles*, contains the record of the first martyrs of that faith, on which our loftiest hopes and fears depend.

The Book of Acts is the connecting link between the Gospels and the Epistles : it enables us more fully to understand the latter, and serves as a sort of running commentary upon them, by the local circumstances which it introduces to our view. It completes those prophecies which were intended to be fulfilled before the scheme of redemption could be fully developed, as it is in the latter books of the New Testament. It places before us, in the most artless and simple narrative, some of the most astonishing events that the annals of time have handed to posterity. The ascension of the blessed Jesus into Heaven, in the presence of a vast number of His disciples ; the fiery unction which fell on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost ; the Holy Spirit descending in a rushing wind, and enabling them suddenly to speak in all languages under Heaven ; the violent death of the first martyr, Stephen, with a glorious vision of beatitude before him, and angels beckoning into the celestial train ; the sublime preaching of Peter, and his inspired

trance, when he saw the partition wall broken down, and the gates of mercy thrown open to the Gentiles; the miracles wrought in the name of Jesus by the first delegates of his spiritual authority; the last extraordinary appearance of Christ at Damascus; the preternatural conversion of Paul, his fiery zeal, his unparalleled exertions, his hairbreadth escapes, his wonderful services to that holy cause, whose followers he had once persecuted to the death.—This is a rapid and imperfect sketch of what we learn from the book of Acts.

But, beyond all this, that book is invaluable to us, as embodying, in one brief authentic record, the history of the first propagation of Christianity, and shewing, by what inadequate and utterly disproportionate means, had not the finger of God been there, a faith that opposed all the passions and prejudices of men; triumphed over every obstacle that prejudice or passion could create. That evidence of divine truth, which *physical* miracles could afford only to those who saw them, is, in their absence, supplied to us by the great *moral* miracle here presented to our view;—the only kind of miracle, of which the lapse of ages cannot weaken the effect. In Christianity we behold a religion, originating in the lowest of mankind, in a small band of poor ignorant fishermen; we behold it standing aloof from all compromise, disdaining all the arts by which plausible errors are sustained,—ushered in by no pomp, save that of prophecy,—

cemented by nothing but the blood of its Founder, and the martyrdom of His Apostles : and, anon, we behold it, in a few short years, striking its deep roots in every direction, spreading from Palestine through all the provinces of Asia, upturning all the idols that heathen prejudice or policy had consecrated, conquering, at last, the conquerors of the world, and making Rome's haughty emperors bend before the crucifix, till the banners of the cross, which it had been death to own, were fearlessly waved over the palaces of the Cæsars, and floated in triumph on the top of the Capitolium ! When we compare the cause with the effect,—the vast result with the insignificant beginning,—the ingenuity of scepticism seems baffled in the attempt to account for it by any ordinary means ; nor does it easily appear how a candid mind can escape the inference, that this success was ordained, against all human probabilities, under the direct influence of that Power, who had decreed to reveal his intentions to mankind.

On the above considerations, which have been often urged by divines, it is not my wish to dwell further now ; but rather to turn your thoughts to an inquiry that naturally springs out of them, namely, by what appointed means, under the divine blessing, these great ends were accomplished. This problem is readily solved by a perusal of the Book of Acts, as well as by the beautiful Epistles of St. Paul. The few specimens of the Apostolic

addresses which it contains, are so many sacred relics of undefiled Christianity, from which we may learn what *kind* of preaching may best hope to be crowned by the divine favour. Jesus Christ dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification, and the grace of the Holy Spirit given to all true believers, to regenerate their corrupt nature, and purify it unto good works, on these great and simple truths is founded all the preaching of the Apostles, and by these alone they prevailed “in demonstration of the Spirit and in power.”

This, my brethren, is the meaning of the emphatic words which I have this day selected as the text of my valedictory address. They are taken from Paul’s farewell speech to the elders of the church which he had founded at Ephesus, a place endeared to his recollections as the scene of his early labours, and of the first triumphs of the faith, when the temple of Diana was converted into a Christian chapel, and the heathen oracles bewailed their deserted shrines. His ministry had been blessed in such a signal manner as none other ever can, and he ascribed it to one cause only : *I have not shunned*, said he, *to declare to you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD.* And well had that holy man kept his word. *In hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in watchings and weariness and fasting, in perils from robbers, in perils from Jews, in perils from the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among*

*false brethren*,—the cross, the glorious cross, was for ever beaming before his eyes; the vision of Damascus was never out of his sight; Christ was there, cheering him through every trial; and wherever he went, the great message which he delivered, whether to peasants in their huts, or to monarchs in their palaces, was “*to know but this, Christ Jesus, and him crucified!*”

Yes, my brethren, that was the foundation of all he had done, and that foundation must still be laid, until the day when all hearts shall be revealed, by every Christian teacher who wishes that himself and his hearers may be saved, and who would “*have a man so account of him as of a minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God.*”

And, oh! how wide a range is spread before him! The great Jehovah is before him, the Ancient of Days, with all His immeasurable attributes, with all His majesty and power,—the God of truth,—the God of glory,—the God of justice,—the God of mercy,—the God of terrors,—the God of love! And wide nature is before him, with the choral hymn of praise, which her million voices sing to the bountiful Creator. And the heart of man is before him, with all its littleness, and all its greatness; with its purity in conception, and its corruption in practice; with its vast reach of intellect, and its clouds of prejudice; with its low wants, and its high desires; with its sensual lusts, and its lofty aspirations,—

now equal to the angel, and now beneath the brute. And conscience is before him, with her innate theology ;—conscience, the vicegerent of God on earth,—the monitor that speaks when all else is silent, and that is silent when all else speaks ! And the world is before him, with its passions, and its pride, and its sophistries, to combat ; its false laws of honour ; its false constructions of moral duties ; its false judgments on others ; its uncharitable perversion of motives ; its plausible excuses for fashionable crimes. And the light of prophecy is before him, that glorious torch, successively seized and transmitted from seer to seer, that total darkness might never prevail, until He, whom they foreshadowed, should appear, and *kings come to the brightness of His rising*. And the patriarchs are before him in all the majesty of antiquity, the types and the forerunners of Christ. And the hallowed lyre of David is before him, that will still respond truly, when touched by a pious hand. And *the glorious company of the Apostles* is before him, and *the goodly fellowship of the Prophets*, and *the noble army of martyrs*, and *the holy church throughout all the world*. And Christ is before him, the man of sorrows, *bruised for our sins, and wounded for our iniquities*. And Christ is before him, *the Lord of Glory*, coming in the clouds to be our Judge, *the King of kings, and the Lord of lords*. And Religion is before him, with all her mercies,—and the Spirit, with all its blessed influ-



ences, *the Faith that overcometh the world, the Charity that covereth the multitude of sins, and the Hope full of immortality.* And Religion is before him in all her terrors—the lake of sulphur, the *smoke of torment*, the withering conscience, the affrighted soul, and *the fire that is never quenched*, and *the worm that will never die.* Heaven, and earth, and hell, are before him; all history, all experience, all prophecy; angels, demons, and men; life, death, and immortality; the changes of time, and unchangeable eternity!

These, brethren, are the themes of the Christian preacher. But O let him beware lest the grandeur of his subjects betray him into an undue exaltation of himself! Let him speak not for himself, but as the oracles of God. *The doctrine*, said Jesus to the Jews, *is not mine, but His that sent me*<sup>1</sup>. Shall the perfect master say this, and shall the frail disciple say less? O when we exhort and when we reprove, we are but as the vocal reeds, transmitting voices not our own. Woe to that preacher who preaches not God, but himself! If he bend to any human party; if he speak to please this or that particular sect; if he institute any cowardly compromise with the wisdom or with the folly of the times; if, for fear of offence, he pare down the word of God to the level of human frailty; if the praise of men be his object

<sup>1</sup> These words occurred in the second Lesson for the day.

instead of the truth of God, the rewards of mammon instead of the cross of Christ; far better had it been for him and for his hearers had he never accepted a task he is unfit for. Yea, though his eloquence should be sweeter than that of angels—though his voice should alternately be silver-tongued and trumpet-tongued, to charm men with the one or to terrify them with the other—though his memory should be stored with all the records of departed time, and his wisdom should dive into all the secrets of futurity, yet his preaching after all will be little better than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, a solemn part to be gravely acted in the motley drama of human politics! It will resemble in its effects those oriental fruits that are beautiful to the eye and fragrant to the smell, but which wither at the touch, and turn to ashes on the lips.

One path, and one only, lies open to the Christian preacher. He may, indeed, vary his language in a thousand ways; he is justified in drawing *collateral* aid from other sources, to avoid that monotony which in the long run produces uselessness; but to *one* great point, to the *one thing* truly *needful*, he must incessantly revert. As there is but *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in all, and through us all*, so the unchanging *counsel* of that Eternal Being is the one great truth he is commissioned to *declare*; in season and out of season,

*through evil report and through good report*, from the first time that he ascends a pulpit to his last time of addressing a congregation, he must tread, though humbly and at an immeasurable distance, in the path which the great Apostle trod; and with him he must gird *the armour of the Spirit*, and “*rightly divide the word of truth*,” and hold the judgments of men in no account, while, according to his conscience, and according to the Bible, he *shuns not to declare ALL the counsel of God*.

In repeating these words, I have laid some stress on the word *all*, because that little word contains a secret of great import. It is the neglect of this that has created all those heresies that rend the bosom of the church of Christ, and tear his seamless coat into a thousand fragments. Men are too apt to study the Bible as they would a mere human work—to dwell on the particular doctrines that they fancy, and to affect to forget the rest. Now in reading any other book than the Bible, we have an undoubted right to consult our own taste, and to make each man his own selections. But we have no right to deal thus with the word of God. Parts of it, indeed, may delight and refresh us more than others; for that divine book has food for every taste. The plain matter of fact mind may love to dwell on the simple historical narratives. The refined poetical mind may find in Job, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, a perpetual source of lofty exaltation. The tender mind will revert for

ever to the exquisite pathos of the last chapters of St. John. The argumentative mind will delight in tracing through all its windings the powerful reasoning of St. Paul. The mystical mind may wander in a pleasing maze, while it attempts to unravel the marvels of the Apocalypse. All this is lawful, and the very different styles in which the inspired penmen wrote, some simple, some tender, some sublime, were doubtless so permitted, nay, graciously ordained by Providence, that all classes of readers might find a spiritual feast, each to suit his own frame of mind. But through all this variety, one same spirit pervades the whole. Truth is one and indivisible. *ALL Scripture was given by inspiration of God*, and if *all* the doctrines emanate equally from Him, what preacher can be justified in narrowing the Almighty, and suppressing some of his truths to exalt the others? Yet there are too many in whose partial eyes that word, which, if true at all, must be true in *all* its bearings, and, everywhere at harmony with itself, has no other authority than that which they invest it with, when they use it as an engine to effect a particular purpose. Thus one dwells on the *mysteries* alone; another holds forth only the *moral* influences of the Gospel. One takes up the holiness of Christ, to the exclusion of his miracles; another, his cross, to the exclusion of his example. One falsely tells us of our own power to serve God efficaciously by

our own efforts; another eloquently descants on salvation through the blood of Christ, but keeps out of sight the necessity of striving to walk in his steps as *children of light*.

To hear one, you might think that works alone can save you, and that there can be *a remission without shedding of blood*. To hear another, you might think that to *call out Lord, Lord*, is all that heaven can require; that *prayer* is not a *companion* of, but a *substitute* for, *holiness*; and that, provided we profess to believe as Christians, we may safely live on as heathens. And all these, to whatever sect they belong, are ready with chapter and verse to prove by the Bible that they are right, and that their neighbours are wrong; and the most contradictory errors are all fathered upon the Bible. And yet the Bible is one, as its Author is one, and were it not, it could not be the word of that immutable Being, who wills not, like his capricious creatures, one thing at one time and another at another; nor could it be the revelation of *Jesus Christ*, who is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*.

To what is all this owing? Simply that they take *partial views* of Scripture, not minding that "half the truth is often the greatest falsehood that can be told<sup>1</sup>," and so teach men a garbled faith, declaring indeed the *counsel of God*, but *shunning*

<sup>1</sup> Lord Halifax.

to declare it ALL'. But if we would be faithful stewards of God's mysteries, we must take the Bible as one harmonious whole, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and each text with those that *seem* to contradict it. We must reject every shadow of favouritism or selection. We must give an equal and impartial exposition of all the truths we find there. We must remember with awe that Jehovah has pronounced an *equal* curse on all those who *take from*, and on all those who *add to*, the words of His book. We must lay down a few general

<sup>1</sup> The following may be taken as a curious specimen of that partial way of explaining Scripture, which makes doctrines rest in particular verses, instead of abiding by the general tenor of the whole. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul says, with a view to check the self-righteousness of men, and to humble them before the Cross : *For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.* Now there is a large class of preachers who often argue from this text, and prove by it much more than the Apostle *intended* it should prove ; almost seeming to infer that good works are not only of no avail, but are rather a drawback from the Christian character, and denote a mistrust in the merits of the Atonement. But now mark how carefully St. Paul himself guards against this misconstruction, by immediately adding : *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them.* Take the whole, and you see how beautifully the Apostle warns men against a *presumptuous morality* on one hand, and against an *inactive faith* on the other. Those who "*shun not to declare ALL the counsel of God*" will do the same. But is it fair to give out half a sentence and *suppress* the other, and so make him say the reverse of what he means ?

principles as the basis of our discourses, and on them erect a systematic and connected view of all the revealed oracles of God. Thus only may we catch, and impart to others, some glimmering of that celestial light, whose full lustre is reserved for the glorious day when we shall behold, *face to face*, all that we now see *darkly through a glass*.

What then is that *counsel of God*, about which men are so divided, and yet on the right understanding of which their eternal interests are at stake? Abstractedly, the *counsel of God* is that primeval law by which the great Being, who alone is from everlasting to everlasting, who dwelleth unseen in the majesty of darkness, and whose throne is pavilioned in unutterable light, governs the immensity of the universe that He created; the law by which all times are to Him as present, *a thousand years as one day, and one day as a thousand years*; the law by which suns and systems are retained in their orbits, “wheeling unshaken through the void immense<sup>1</sup>”; the law by which the restless ocean obeys the voice that said, *thus far, and no further, shalt thou go, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*; the law by which insects creep, and by which angels soar; the law by which harmony rose out of chaos, and light sprang from the womb of darkness. This is the law of Jehovah—this is the *counsel of God*! And every study that enlarges our view of the majesty of nature,

<sup>1</sup> Akenside—Pleasures of Imagination.

and of the glories of the creation, is to be applauded, so long as that noble end is kept in view, and so long as we guard against the obvious danger of dwelling on secondary causes till we forget the first great Cause of all, and admiring less the greatness of the Eternal, than our own puny efforts in discovering His laws.

But the Christian view of *the counsel of God* is less vague, and more definite, in the objects of its contemplation. From the bewildering variety of things that crowd beneath the gaze of the natural philosopher, the eye seeks repose in a more circumscribed prospect, and rests upon that great scheme for man's redemption, which was laid ere the world began, and will survive its reeking ruins.

To a Christian, then, the question *What is the counsel of God*, resolves itself into this one :—*What do we chiefly learn from the Bible?* And, if we follow, not the fancies of human conjecture, but the oracles of revelation, the answer will be a very simple one. Every science rests on a few general principles ; and so does the first of all sciences, theology. The whole Scriptures, whether we consider the prophecies of the Old Testament, or the miracles of the New, are founded on *three* great doctrines, which, by their union, constitute the GOSPEL, the glad tidings of redemption to mankind ; the doctrine of the FALL, the doctrine of the CROSS, the doctrine of the SPIRIT. These are the great truths which the Bible reveals ; and our message is



to deliver them. These three truths may be called *the doctrinal trinity*, and are as indissolubly connected as that mysterious triune essence which we worship under the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The doctrine of the FALL shows the *necessity* for an ATONEMENT;—the doctrine of the CROSS the *efficacy* of that ATONEMENT;—the doctrine of the SPIRIT the *moral influence* of that ATONEMENT. So that, finally, *the great sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ upon the cross is, to the Christian, all in all*. There may be an infinite variety of ways of setting forth these truths; but to keep them constantly in view, as the general principles on which his discourses are to be founded, is the main duty of the preacher. A discourse where they appear not, or only act a subordinate part, may be an elegant essay, but cannot be a Christian sermon. And yet, unless we are very cautious *how* we present these truths, we may so preach them as to do more harm than good; we may, without intending it, be using them to sap away what they were intended to consolidate,—the foundations of morality. We may say no more than is true, and yet, by a partial view of the truth, we may exhibit both the *fall* and the *cross* in such terms, as will encourage men to look upon the one as an *excuse* for sin, and upon the other as a *cover* for it. Suffer me, then, my brethren, before we part, to retrace to you once more an outline of those views on which my addresses from this place have been

founded, and to leave it with you as the last token of my regard, and the last remembrance of a too imperfect ministry.

1. The first awful lesson that we learn from revelation, is that

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.

We learn that man,—proud, arrogant, self-sufficient man,—is a miserable *fallen* being, by nature a child of wrath, an heir of death, “spouse of the worm, and brother of the clay.” Experience cries aloud, to bear witness to the voice of God, and the history of empires, and the biography of individuals, too plainly testify, that “the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.” To what *extent* this innate depravity goes—whether *entire*, or *partial*,—whether an occasional *perversion*, or a total *prostration* of moral power,—is but a question of *degree*. We may, if we like, dispute that statement of the doctrine that recognises no innate moral difference between man and man,—between the wretch who betrays his country, and the patriot who dies to save it. We may say with the poet,

Mean tho' I am, not wholly so,  
Since quickened by thy breath,—

We may, if we like, consider the moral conflicts, and the perpetual contradictions which most men

experience, as indicating a nature not *utterly* depraved, though, in the words of our articles, "very far gone from original righteousness;" for utter depravity owns *no* misgivings, save only the fear of the consequences of crime. We may, I say, make all these allowances; and yet, with them all, the stern fact remains that, even according to this less literal and more indulgent construction of the Scriptural declarations, the natural depravity of man is such, that his best and loftiest actions, when sifted, disclose a leaven of self-interest, of vanity, and of deceit, that must degrade them in the eyes of Him who spies our secret thoughts; and that, unless, by some mighty and mysterious means, the justice of Jehovah can be reconciled to His mercy, all mankind must be lost for ever.

Men of the world are little aware that they are daily adding fresh proofs of the truth of this doctrine, by their very efforts to ridicule and to condemn it; and that, every time that they curl a contemptuous lip at the mention of the words *original sin*, they are only betraying that fatal pride which is the great stumbling-block of all, and that self-righteousness by which Adam fell, and by which "in Adam all die."

2. But, while the Evangelical teacher feels it a sacred duty to drag human pride from the dark recesses of the heart, and to lower it before the declarations of God, he must take care not to hold forth this doctrine so as to lead timid natures to

despair of their salvation, or to cause them to plunge into a hopeless vortex of sin, while they inwardly exclaim,—*O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* When we tell our hearers of “the loss of Eden,” we must remind them that it is only lost

Till one greater man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat ;

that, if we have authority to state sternly, that “in Adam all die,” we have the same authority to state, cheeringly, that “in Christ all are made alive;” that, if by nature they are children of sin, yet “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” In a word, when we have humbled them by the doctrine of the *fall*, we must console them by the doctrine of the *cross*: we are to show them their darkness, and then hold forth the light;—to make them feel their weakness, and then acknowledge their strength;—to make their fetters clank, and then point the road to freedom;—to bring them first within sight of hell, and then throw open the gates of heaven.

But is this all? And if we stop here, is there no danger to be apprehended? Yes, and the greatest danger; the danger of that worst of delusions, that makes religion a mere scapegoat, loosens all the moral and social ties, and destroys the wholesome sense of responsibility. What! Shall we engage our hearers to acknowledge the Fall only as a cloak

for careless sin ? Or shall we bring them to the foot of the Cross only to pollute it,—to “crucify the Son of God afresh,”—to sanctify sin under the garb of religion, and to provide hypocrisy with a saintly mantle, and a soft cushion to repose upon ? Shall we decorate the outer temple, and array it in all “the beauty of holiness,” and yet suffer the rank weeds of error to twine their poisonous tendrils round the pillars of the sanctuary, and the obscene birds of rapine and lawless lust to nestle in the shadow of the altar of God ? *Shall we* (exclaims, indignantly, the Apostle of the Gentiles, that Paul, whose doctrine some have so perverted), *shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ?* O, let his answer be yours, my brethren :—*God forbid !*

3. But how, then, shall a fallen being, with a corrupt heart within him, and a corrupt world around him, escape not only from the penalty, but from the power, the dominion, the thralldom of that sin which holds him in the giant grasp of an unrelenting strength ? Of himself he cannot ; but with the Spirit’s aid he may. Here, then, comes the third great doctrine, which, if we keep not ever prominent, we deliver but half, not *all the counsel of God* ; the doctrine full of comfort, and assurance, and faith, and hope, and charity ; the doctrine of the Holy *Spirit’s* influence. By that Spirit, we are *the temples of God*. By that Spirit, the faithful are *sealed unto redemption’s day*. By that Spirit, may be attained that *pure religion and unde-*

*filed before God, which visits the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and which keeps itself unspotted from the world.*

But, again, *how* is this agency manifested? How this influence exerted? Ask its mysterious emblem, *the wind, whence it cometh, and whither it goeth!* Ye know not;—neither know ye *how* the Spirit acts. But this we know; that it acts no longer now as it did in the Apostles' days, but by a silent operation on the heart, not descending in fire, but dropping gently, like dew, and visible only in its effects. The fruits of the Spirit the world cannot give, nor take away. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, faith, meekness, temperance, humility, patience, forgiveness; and *against these there is no law*. These are the real fruits and evidences of the Spirit in hearts renewed, and affections purified; and not in those sudden and wonderful conversions, and those pretended calls and miraculous gifts from heaven, which are either the ravings of insanity, or the hypocritical daring of those impious wretches, who rush with a foul lie into the presence of their Maker, and usurp the name of God, to magnify themselves to men. O, the peace of the secret heart,—the unboastful resignation to God's will,—the benevolence that sweetens the cares of life,—the serene anticipation of the hour of death,—the patient longing for immortality,—the charity that does to others as we would that they should do to

us ;—these are the tokens of the Spirit, the earnest of the Christian's call ! These are they which, when set forth by Paul's majestic eloquence, made *Felix tremble* on his throne at the thought of his iniquity, while the more amiable Agrippa *almost wished himself a Christian*. These are they which, as given in the sublime precepts of Scripture, in the parables and in the example of our Lord, and in the last chapters of most of the Epistles, form that perfect code of morals, that internal evidence of the truth of Christianity, on which the reflecting mind reposes after every passing doubt, with a greater joy, and a livelier hope, than on volumes of metaphysical discussion !—and yet, these are they which, if they be earnestly urged, as they ought to be, from the pulpit, there are many perverted minds that will be ready to exclaim, that we do not *preach the Gospel* !

What ! not preach the Gospel, because we *declare all*, and not a part of, *the counsel of God* ? Not preach the Gospel, because, when we have told men of the merits of the *death* of Christ, we strive also to lead them to the imitation of the *life* of Christ ? Not preach the Gospel, because we hold ourselves not merely preachers of the *cross*, but of the *resurrection* also, that we may be *risen with Christ*, and that *our life may be hid with him in God* ? Not preach the Gospel, because, in telling man he is a fallen being, we also tell him, that,

through the Spirit of grace, he may rise again? Not preach the Gospel, because that secret influence, which Christ Himself compares to the wind, of which none can see the approach or the departure, is not by us described as a palpable sensation, or visible *conversion*, of which the first moment can be told, and calculated to a certainty by those who presume themselves the elect of God? Not preach the Gospel, because we do not insist on those dark points of *predestination* and *election*, where the human intellect is bewildered and overpowered,

And finds no end, in wandering mazes lost?

Not preach the Gospel, because we think it not all to improve the *faith and hope* of our hearers, but dare to remind them that the *greatest of all these is charity!* Not preach the Gospel, because we warn men that they have no part in God's forgiveness for Christ's sake, unless they learn to forgive one another's injuries! Not preach the Gospel, because in labouring to make them better Christians, we wish, if possible, to make them also better children, better parents, better neighbours, and better friends! Oh! if thus we are condemned as not preaching the Gospel, our appeal must be from the caprice of men to that unchanging Being who inhabiteth the praises of eternity, and by whom every man, whether preacher or hearer, will one



day be judged, not according to his talents, nor according to his learning, but according to his truth and sincerity of heart.

In that truth and sincerity, my brethren, I have this day delivered, fearlessly, and without caring for the approbation of any party, those general principles which I conceive to be the true elements of Christianity. On them all my sermons have been founded. In the development of them consists the soul of Christian preaching. But, whether you adopt this view of Christianity or another, I have one parting request to make: *never fear to avow your own opinions, but bear meekly with those of others.* Infidels bring up *intolerance* as a charge against Christianity. The charge is false, but our conduct should prove it so. Christianity is tolerant, but Christians often are not. The time indeed is gone, we trust for ever, when fire and sword were the arguments of those in power, and when a slight difference in abstract points made men liable to the scaffold and to the stake. But the embers of that spirit yet remain. There are still those who, if they dared, would be Lauds and Gardiners again. We are all apt to forget the obvious truth, that, in religion as in politics, our neighbour is no more bound to think with us, than we are to think with him; to his own Master let each stand or fall. He who made the heart alone can know the tone of each chord, the bias of each

spring<sup>1</sup>; how far our errors are wilful, how far involuntary; when deserving of *mercy*, and when calling for *justice*.

Yet learn to distinguish between *toleration* and *indifference*. To avoid the intimacy of professed infidels, except when you may hope to do them good, is no violation of Christian charity. Your faith may be firm now; but you know not how long they will let it remain so. And if they rob you of your dearest hopes, what other consolation can they offer you instead? The fleeting joys of time are a miserable substitute for the prospects of eternity. Yet those principles, which have hitherto resisted sophistry, may not be proof against the shafts of ridicule. Boldly maintain your faith. *Whosoever denieth Christ before men, him will He deny before the Father and before His angels.*

In his life this distinction is beautifully illustrated. When He saw the money-changers *making the house of prayer a den of thieves*, He indignantly chased them from the temple. But when a multitude insulted Him in a certain village, and the disciples would have called down *fire from heaven*

' Who made the heart, 'tis He alone  
Decidedly can try us;  
He knows each chord its various tone,  
Each spring its various bias.  
Then at the balance let's be mute,  
We never can adjust it;  
What's done, we scarcely may compute,  
But know not what's resisted.      BURNS.

to consume it, He calmly said : *The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* Why this severity in the one case, and this indulgence in the other ? Because the one was ignorance, the other wilful blasphemy. Christian, in this, as in all things, take thy Master for thy guide. Keep, if thou canst, *the unity of the spirit* ; but keep it *in the bond of peace.*

And now, friends and brethren, I have done. I have trespassed at great length on that indulgence which I shall never have to crave again, for I have felt a lingering pleasure in dwelling on these, the last admonitions of a friend. The principles of your faith will hereafter be explained to you by another, and earnestly do I pray that God's blessing may rest on his endeavours. May he never *shun to declare unto you all the counsel of God!* May he be more fortunate than I was in my earnest and repeated endeavours to impress upon your minds that, when an institution is ordained by Christ himself, it is not, it cannot be, a matter of indifference whether you attend to it or not. May he rejoice in witnessing a far better attendance at the Lord's table, than I have done during the twelve years that I have lived amongst you<sup>1</sup>. For myself, I have but one

<sup>1</sup> To those who have hitherto thought lightly of the Sacrament, I beg to recommend two admirable sermons of the Rev. H. BLUNT, from the perusal of which it will be difficult for them to rise, without a secret resolve to leave no longer unregarded so essential a part of their Christian duty.

word to add. If there be any here who have ever offended me, I freely and from my heart forgive them; and if there be any who have, or who think they have, just cause of offence against me, I here ask their forgiveness. To the few who have been here ever since the consecration of this chapel, and to all those who for years have so indulgently borne with one who, laden with infirmities like themselves, could never have presumed to utter words of reproof, but that he felt he was preaching from higher authority than his own, even from the *counsel* of the great Jehovah—to those, in parting, I return my especial thanks.

*“And now, brethren, I commend you all to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified<sup>1</sup>.”* May you never forget your allegiance to Him, and to Jesus Christ whom He hath sent! May you keep his saying, *that you may never taste of death!* May he who, through the *Eternal Spirit*, offered himself without spot to God, *purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God<sup>2</sup>!* May ye be kind to one another, tender-hearted, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you! May you so live, and so die, as those who look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the

<sup>1</sup> Acts xx. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Epistle and Gospel of the day, 5th Sunday in Lent.

*world to come!* May you serve your God, *in all time of your health* and prosperity, as ye will wish ye had served him *in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment!* Then, rescued from the *Fall*, redeemed by the *Cross*, and renewed by the *Spirit*, Christ himself will meet you in the air, and open to you the gates of immortality: and thus may we hope to meet again where sin and sorrow are unknown!

Meantime, with fervent prayers for your present and eternal welfare, with gratitude to some and benevolence towards all, I repeat those words, which make the spirit linger, but which must be said at last: *Finally, brethren, FAREWELL!*

THE END.

**THE PREACHING OF ST. PAUL, CONSIDERED AS A  
MODEL FOR SACRED ORATORS:**

IN A

**DISCOURSE**

DELIVERED ON ADVENT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1836,

IN

**ELY CHAPEL, ELY PLACE, HOLBORN,**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**RE-OPENING OF THAT CHAPEL.**

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BY THE

**REV. A. C. L. D'ARBLAY, M.A. F.C.P.S.**

FELLOW OF CHRIST COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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*Tu longè sequere, et vestigia semper adora.*—STATIUS.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,  
rightly dividing the word of truth.—2 TIM. II. 15.

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TO THE  
VENERABLE G. O. CAMBRIDGE,  
ARCHDEACON OF MIDDLESEX,  
*&c. &c.*

---

MY DEAR SIR,

When you see your name prefixed to these pages, your kindness will forgive my not waiting for that permission which perhaps your modesty would have refused. As I dedicated to you the first-fruits of my pen, it was natural that I should inscribe to you also this beginning of the after-harvest, since, after a short retirement, I am now resuming my sacred duties at the call of the same partial friend under whose auspices I first began them.

When you proposed to me to take the charge



of ELY CHAPEL, I was well aware of the arduousness of the undertaking. I knew that, lost in a recess, it attracted no notice from passers by, and was unknown to many in its immediate neighbourhood. I knew that, since it had been closed, other places of worship had sprung up, and had drawn off those who formerly attended there. But I knew also that, while large subscriptions were collecting for building new temples to the Lord, this ancient house of prayer could not long remain neglected, without furnishing a handle to the enemies of the church. I did not think myself at liberty to shrink from a possible chance of being useful. The bark is now launched, I fear, against wind and tide; but the issue is not in the hands of him who plies the oar, but of that viewless Spirit, whose breath alone can swell the sail.

If it be His pleasure that my humble efforts shall prove successful, to you, under the divine blessing, I shall owe it; if not, to have paid this debt of gratitude to the friend and patron of my youth, is a satisfaction of which no failure can deprive me.

That *faithful steward*, which I have here attempted to describe, you, my dear Sir, have realized. Retaining in age the energies of youth, you seem exempted for a while from the common laws of nature, to prolong a career of disinterested benevolence. That you may long be spared to do so, is the prayer of

Your most obliged and faithful servant,

A. D'ARBLAY.

*December 19, 1836.*



## ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE.

(1 Cor. iv. 1—5.)

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### EXORDIUM.

- Article (1.) Man, since the *fall*, in constant need of a *monitor*, both under the law of nature, and that of *grace*. Hence the origin and antiquity of the *priesthood*.
- (2.) Its *corruptions*, under whatever system, no argument against the institution itself.
- (3.) Enumeration of the offices and duties of a Christian preacher.
- (4.) Arduousness of the undertaking. Circumstances of the re-opening of *Ely Chapel*.
- (5.) Sketch of the mission and character of PAUL.
- (6.) Encouragement drawn from his example, and from other sources.

### DIVISION.

- (7.) His preaching considered as a model in *three* points of view : *doctrine, manner, moral qualities*.

#### I. DOCTRINE.

- (8.) His epistles the most complete receptacle of the great doctrines of our faith. Himself his best *commentator*. Insufficiency of mere *moral essays*. CHRIST the true *foundation* and corner-stone. His attributes and offices enumerated.
- (9.) Necessity of keeping him always in view, whatever points we dwell upon, from the highest attributes of *Deity* to the commonest duties of social *man*.
- (10.) The doctrine of the *cross* prepared by that of the *fall*, and cemented by that of the *Spirit*.  
The *fruits* of the Spirit to be insisted upon.
- (11.) The dark points of *predestination* and *election* fitter for the closet than for the pulpit.

## II. MANNER.

- (12.) The manner and style of Paul *varied* with every occasion.  
The expression *becoming all things to all men* explained.
- (13.) Contrast between his two interviews with *Felix* and with *Agrippa*.
- (14.) The gospel preacher to vary his tone, and adopt several styles, that all classes of hearers may in turns receive the word of God.

## III. MORAL QUALITIES.

Paul's *faithfulness*, implying :

1. His *sincerity*.

- (15.) This, with his *great energy*, marked him out for miraculous conversion.
- (16.) His disdain of the arts of rhetoric and of worldly wisdom.
- (17.) Denunciation of those who preach *themselves* and not *Christ*.  
No extent of *genius* can atone for insincerity.

2. His *independence*.

- (18.) Contrast of a heathen philosopher, obliged to truckle to the caprices of his hearers. The judgment of men vanishes before that of God.
- (19.) Respect due to the mission of the minister of Christ. His need of prayer and self watchfulness. He is to speak with *authority* the word of truth.
- (20.) His doctrines to be referred to the *general tenor* of scripture, not to *single texts*.

## PERORATION.

- (21.) *Party spirit* reprov'd and disclaimed.
- (22.) The issue of the ministry is in the hands of God.  
Congregation exhorted to pray for its success.
- (23.) Concluding appeal to the Holy Spirit.

## S E R M O N, &c.

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### 1 CORINTHIANS iv. 1—5.

LET A MAN SO ACCOUNT OF US, AS OF THE MINISTERS OF CHRIST, AND STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD. MOREOVER, IT IS REQUIRED IN STEWARDS, THAT THEY BE FOUND FAITHFUL. BUT WITH ME, IT IS A VERY SMALL THING THAT I BE JUDGED OF YOU, OR OF MAN'S JUDGMENT; YEA, I JUDGE NOT MINE OWN SELF; FOR I KNOW NOTHING BY MYSELF; YET AM I NOT HEREBY JUSTIFIED; BUT HE THAT JUDGETH ME IS THE LORD. THEREFORE JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME, UNTIL THE LORD COME, WHO BOTH WILL BRING TO LIGHT THE HIDDEN THINGS OF DARKNESS, AND WILL MAKE MANIFEST THE COUNSELS OF THE HEARTS; AND THEN SHALL EVERY MAN HAVE PRAISE OF GOD.

(1.) THE history of the priesthood is almost coeval with the history of the world. If we would trace its origin, we must look for it in the nature and constitution of the human heart: not of that heart which came, radiant with truth and innocence, from the hands of the Creator, but of that which the *fall* delegated to us, degraded and

debased by the great adversary of the soul. If the natural man be, as the ancient scriptures describe him, and as hourly experience confirms, a fallen and perverted being, fallen from the image and likeness of his God, though bearing some faint marks of his celestial origin ; with an inner light, not wholly darkened, but fatally obscured ; with a sense of truth, and a love of error ; with a conscience just strong enough to appreciate good, but not strong enough to prevent the choice of evil ; with intellectual powers that can soar to the height of heaven, and animal propensities that lower him to the depths of hell ; with affections worthy of the angel, and animosities worthy of the brute ; if, moreover, man, even under the gospel, be a being only partly restored to his lost image, with “ the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” still perpetually before him, with his own evil heart ever threatening to deceive him—with a constant tendency to substitute his own impotent *self-righteousness* for the righteousness of Christ, or a no less impious desire to make the holy Jesus a scapegoat for his sins, and to think it religion to be a *hearer, not a doer of the word* ; if man be all this (and who will venture to gainsay it ?) then, surely, a being so constituted, and so tempted from without and from within, stands in constant need of some *faithful* monitor, authorized to remind him of the law that he trans-

gresses, of the covenant that he annuls, of the truth that he betrays, of the God that he forgets, of the Saviour that he forsakes, of the Spirit that he grieves and quenches, of the time that he wastes away, of the hopes that he forfeits, of the perils that he encounters, of the judgment that awaits him, of the eternity beyond the tomb.

No wonder, then, that, under the Jewish theocracy, priests and Levites were so early ordained, and continued through the unbroken line of patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets, till that perfect High Priest, whom they had imperfectly foreshadowed, came, as at this time, *not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it*, by engrafting a purer stem on the decayed and rotten branches, a service of freedom and of love in lieu of one of bondage and of fear; and no wonder that, not only were his apostles sent forth in all directions to proclaim Him, but that, even when their mission was executed, and Christianity had overcome all obstacles, ministers were still ordained in regular succession to guard the sacred avenues of the truth, and preserve among men *the faith once delivered to the saints*.

(2.) If this be the benevolent purpose for which the priesthood was designed, shall the institution be charged with the horrible abuses that the perverseness of man introduced under its name? No! Hypocrisy may wear a saintly mantle, but this



cannot alter the sacredness of truth ! What though we behold so vast a portion of the world where superstition still rears her sanguinary throne, and where the only use of a priesthood is to foment savage warfare, and pollute the altar with the incense of human sacrifice, and with the steam of carnage ? What though we may retrace the long history of the Papacy, and see the ministry, in the hands of the hierarchs of Rome, degraded from its high estate, and withered down to a servile engine of temporal power, a vile panderer to the rich, and grinder of the poor ? What though her corrupt sons should, under the false artifices of confession, have wormed themselves into the secrets of families, and succeeded for ages in aggrandising themselves by destroying the peace of others ? Are we prepared to argue against every thing that is liable to abuse ? If not, however much we may deplore these and other perversions of the truth, neither the atrocities of Brahmins, or of our own ancient Druids, nor the crimes of Popes, nor the vices of Cardinals, nor the occasional lapses of a few erring men out of the great body of our pious and exemplary clergy, can be received as any argument against a mission ordained by God, and confirmed by Christ, to fan the torch of celestial truth, to preserve among men the sacred fire, to keep *their lamps trimmed, their lights burning, and their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

(3.) How great, my brethren, how glorious is the province of a true *minister of Christ, a faithful steward of the mysteries of God!* He is appointed to stand between Heaven and Hell, pointing to the glories of the one, and to the terrors of the other! He is appointed “to justify the ways of God to men,” and to reconcile the ways of men to God. He is appointed to be a link of that sacred chain which connects the Apostles’ age with ours, and ours with the last days of man. He is appointed to speak without respect of persons, teaching without compromise hopes that make the harmless peasant rejoice in his cabin, fears that make the guilty monarch tremble upon his throne. He is appointed for the thoughtless votary of the world, to be a monitor of death and a herald of eternity. He is appointed for the afflicted, to pour balm, like the good Samaritan, into their wounds, and to make men exclaim, as did the prophet of old: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!* He is appointed for the wicked, to cry aloud, and spare not; to lift up his voice like a trumpet, to dart his rebuke like a thunderbolt, and shew his people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins. He is appointed for the poor, to teach them to be content, in the prospect of unfading treasures, *where moth corrupteth not, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

He is appointed for the rich and for the great, to warn them of the snares under their feet, to humble them before that Power who alone can give and take away, and to teach them that use of transient things, without which they cannot hope for everlasting habitations. He is appointed for the simple, to enrich their minds with greater stores than those of philosophy, the knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. He is appointed for the wise, to remind them that *the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God*, unless tempered by his Spirit, and illumined by his light. He is appointed for the child of genius, to teach him to dedicate the sacred flame to the glory of Him who kindled it, and *to bring down every high thought* and lofty imagination *into captivity and obedience* to our Lord and Saviour Christ. He is appointed for seasons of public madness, to stand like Aaron *between the living and the dead, until the moral plague be stayed*. He is appointed to steer the holy ark of faith between the tempests of dissent and the false calm of infidelity. He is appointed to be a guardian of the public morals, an instructor of youth, a comforter of age, a healer of dissensions, an assuager of animosities, an impartial friend of all the family of man. He is appointed to perpetuate the knowledge of those holy oracles, from which alone we know as much of future destiny as it is

the will of God should be revealed on this side the grave. And, lastly, he is appointed to ease the bed of sickness, to smooth the pillow of death, to assist the lingering spirit as it "shuffles off its mortal coil," and to gild with the rays of penitential hope its first flight to immortality.

(4.) Such, brethren, is a *faithful steward of the mysteries of God*. But who shall be equal to all these things? What mortal man, conscious of his frailness, shall embark in so high an undertaking, and not feel his need, use what efforts he may, of the indulgence of his hearers, and of the pardon of his God? And how awfully, under that conviction, must the weight and burden of *responsibility* press at this moment on him who, in the heart of this enormous Babylon, surrounded by Dissenters on one side, by large and opulent Churches on the other, first addresses that little flock which he is to feed with the manna of eternal life, and on this, the first day of the Ecclesiastical year, re-opens for their worship this ancient temple, small but classical relic of our forefathers' piety!

(5.) There is, in the example and preaching of the Apostles, and especially of St. Paul, something calculated at first sight to make their successors despair of their mission, and shrink abashed from any attempt at emulating the days of old. For who, in this dark degenerate age, shall presume upon that Spirit which was poured upon him with

all the flame and vigor of inspiration—with all “the pomp and prodigality of heaven!” When I think of that marvellous man—when I first behold him, a Roman officer, persecuting the Church of Christ unto the death—when I look anon, and see him prostrate on the earth, and quailing before the burning eye of God, as it flashes through the clouds athwart the thunder and the fire—when I see him contemning the powers he had worshipped, and yearning for the honour of the God he had despised—when I follow him over that vast track of sea and land, through those unparalleled *perils* that he so touchingly describes—when, in spite of all obstacles, I see him founding Churches, overthrowing idols, and everywhere measuring his steps by his conquests—when I study his Epistles, and see the visible traces of inspiration in their simple majesty, in their occasional bursts of unrivalled sublimity, in that close reasoning, which is not the less connected for defying all ordinary rules of logic—I feel bewildered, and overpowered, and lost in admiration, and my heart sinks within me as I whisper to myself—Who now shall catch the mantle of the Apostle? What radiant feet shall tread in the luminous track he left behind?

(6.) But when, on the other hand, I recollect that it was not of himself alone, nor only of the Apostles and their immediate successors, but of

the whole future race of those who should follow sacred functions, that he said, *Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God*—and when, encouraged by this, I look upward to that great Spirit, without whose aid we are nothing, but with whom everything, who can shed where He will the dews of his grace, and turn the barren rock into a fruitful field—when I look around me, and see how many ministers, in this vast metropolis, are still accounting themselves worthy to be *stewards of His mysteries*, and are gloriously advocating His sacred cause—when I call to mind the splendid proof of attachment to that cause which so many in this noble city have lately given by the funds which have sprung up, as it were by magic, to serve for the foundation of new temples to the Lord—I feel that as is my *fear*, so should also be my *hope* ; that as is my *peril*, so should also be my *zeal* ; and that as is my *weakness*, so, by His grace, may be my *strength*.

(7.) With such convictions, the ministers of this, and of every age, however hopeless to rival St. Paul's perfection, are bound, albeit at an humble distance, to be *followers of him, even as he was a follower of Christ* :” for, whether we examine his *doctrines*, his *manner* of presenting them, or the high *moral qualities*, by which he so powerfully acted on men's minds, and caused those doc-

trines to be universally received,—in each of those three points of view he may be proposed as a perfect model to every *steward of the mysteries of God*.

(8.) I. In the *first* place, however beautifully the other books of the Sacred Canon may help to enforce or to illustrate them, the great fundamental *doctrines* of Christianity are allowed, by the unanimous voice of all theologians, to be nowhere so completely, or so argumentatively embodied, as they are in the writings of St. Paul. More particularly, in the letters to the *Romans*, to the *Corinthians*, and to the *Hebrews*, we find the most admirable and well-reasoned digests of the great subject matter of a Christian's faith. Well had it been, if a hungry host of obscure commentators had not obtruded their pigmy minds upon the giant intellect of the Apostle, making plain things crooked, while they vainly strove to make the crooked plain ! From these ever streaming fountains, that flow freely for whoever is athirst, let the divine unceasingly draw ; remembering that, after all, the best commentator on Paul is no other than Paul himself, if we interpret one hard passage by a similar one that is more easy, and so follow his own advice, of “ *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*.” We shall there find on what great points our discourses must chiefly turn if we would be accounted *faithful*

*stewards.* We shall find where to cast our anchor, and where to fix our hopes. We shall find how he spurns the mock-wisdom of those philosophers who waste their hearers' time in abstract disquisitions, and metaphysical subtilties that lead to no tangible result. We shall find how little they partake of his spirit, who are satisfied with dry essays on mere morality, that never can be binding, because they give the rule without the motive, the law without the authority of the Lawgiver. We shall find that it is not left to human invention or ingenuity to decide what to take or what to leave, as God forbid it should, for then would every preacher follow his own wayward fancy, and every congregation would constitute a sect! We shall find that the main work is ready done to hand for us, and that, although we may vary the details without end, yet, whatever *superstructure* we wish to build, *other FOUNDATION can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Jesus Christ whose advent the Church on this day celebrates—Jesus Christ, the Son of Jehovah, the copartner of His eternity—Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of fallen man, who, as at this time, left the abodes of the blessed, and veiled his glory in the garments of mortality, taking, *not the high nature of angels, but the lowly seed of Abraham*—Jesus Christ, the man of sorrows, *who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification*—Jesus Christ, the Lord

•



of glory, *who ascended on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*—Jesus Christ, who will come in the clouds of heaven to judge a corrupt and perverted world—Jesus Christ, *the way, the truth, and the life*—Jesus Christ, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever!*

(9.) This is the *foundation*, and if we are disciples of Paul, whatever other points we enlarge upon, this must ever be kept in view, and never covered over by hollow generalities. We know, for instance, that *the heavens declare the glory of God*, and that the wondrous laws of the creation teach our finite minds to conceive the sublime idea of an infinite Creator. And who shall say that the Christian preacher may not occasionally glance at those topics, that elevate the soul, and spiritualise the universe? But he that contemplates the great *attributes of God*, let him view them also as the *attributes of Christ and of the Spirit*; otherwise he is not preaching Christianity but *Deism*—he is not occupying a Christian pulpit, but only a philosopher's chair. So, if we wish to enforce any particular point of the *moral law*, as for instance the love of *truth*, let us do so, not from mere arguments of *expediency*, as a heathen moralist might do, but on the *authority of Him who left us an example that we should follow his steps*.

(10.) This is the *foundation*, but *let every man take heed what he buildeth thereupon*. The fol-

lowers of Paul must learn with Timothy *rightly to divide the word of truth*—they must take up THE Cross, but they must not *stop* at the Cross—they must look at it with *forward*, and with *reverted* eye—they must show the *necessity of the Cross*, by convincing man of his *depravity*, by showing the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the majesty of that atonement which alone could reconcile and blend in one the *justice* and the *mercy* of our God. They must show also *the fruits of the Cross*, by going on to *the Resurrection*, that, *as Jesus died and rose again, even so may we also be risen with Him, that our life may be hid with Christ in God*. And they must preach the *Spirit*, the Comforter, the Paraclete, the Lord and Giver of life, whom He sent to supply His place below, when He ascended to be our mediator on high, till that second advent, when He will appear in judgment, amid the flames of an expiring earth, and the glories of an expanding heaven. And lastly, they must strive to impress their hearers with the urgency of making manifest *the fruits of the Spirit* in themselves, by hearts subdued, by affections purified, by passions chained down, by tempers crucified, *by putting off the works of darkness, by putting on the armour of light*, and, above all, by imbibing that universal BENEVOLENCE which, *indulgent to others, and severe only to self*, is the beauty, and the glory, and the essence of Christianity!

(11.) Such are the points that contain what Paul calls *the wisdom of God in a mystery, ordained before the world began*—and he that takes them not all in turns, hardly deserves to be called a Christian, since he preaches at best a *mutilated Christianity*. These, I say, are the great doctrines that are scattered equally throughout all the splendid writings of St. Paul, and on each of which he dwells infinitely more than on those dark points of *predestination* and *election*, which some think it a mark of extra holiness to dwell upon almost exclusively, although they are subjects on which the Apostle's meaning has too often been strained and distorted, subjects which he comparatively keeps in the back ground, and fitter far for the closet than for the pulpit, since, without bringing us one step nearer to our salvation, they only tend to make our minds restless, fretful, and unsettled.

II. Having said thus much on the doctrines of St. Paul, I wish to add a few remarks on his *manner* of presenting them.

(12.) And here, there is so glaring a contrast, that it can hardly fail to strike the most superficial hearer or reader of the word of God. While the doctrines of the Apostle, like the eternal fount whence he derives them, are every where the same, his *manner* of putting them forth is so varied, and so skilfully and with such consummate art adapted to the understanding, rank, taste, or posi-

tion of his hearers, that there is scarcely more difference between his style and that of Peter, James, or John, than between Paul's style at one time, and Paul's style at another. Nay, he alludes himself to the fact, when he talks of *becoming all things to all men*, an expression which has been shamefully perverted and misquoted by those who have dared to use the Apostle's name as an authority for swerving from the truth, or accommodating it to circumstances ; while all that it means is that diversity of expression which suits a diversity of hearers, and the tact of keeping back for a time those truths for which his disciples were not yet ripe, feeding *some with milk, and others with strong meat*, according to their different capacities.

(13.) Of this varied manner, the book of Acts supplies two beautiful specimens. Behold Paul standing before Felix ! The Roman governor is arrayed in all the pomp and pride of power : Paul is sent for to justify himself ;—his life is trembling in the scale. Does he confine himself to a mere defence ? No ! With all the boldness that conscious truth inspires, he holds forth the new doctrines in all their naked and unmitigated asperity : he *reasons of righteousness*, with one who had obtained power by his crimes ; of *temperance*, with one who was wallowing in sin ; of *judgment to come*, with one who feared no other judge than his emperor. He *reasons* of these things, and behold, *Felix*

*trembles*—the haughty Roman trembles, the powerful before the powerless, the accuser before the accused!

But when Paul comes before Agrippa, he finds a different spirit to deal with. He has to do with a far more upright and amiable man—he changes his style and tone accordingly—he seeks not to terrify him by the threats, but to soothe him by the mercies and consolations of religion—he no longer reasons on the fearful mysteries of the Gospel, but he descants *persuasively* on its glorious truths—and you all know Agrippa's answer, and Paul's sublime reply. Yet to both he delivers the same truth, but in a different manner, adapted in turns to each.

(14.) Here, then, let us fearlessly take our stand. Let each preacher of the gospel keep true to his sacred oath, of holding forth the great doctrines of the fall and of the atonement,—of the resurrection and of the Spirit; but as for the manner, and style, and mode of doing so, let him be guided by circumstances, by his own taste and by that of his hearers, and allow himself the same latitude as Paul did. Let him have one style for London, another for the country; one for a parish, another for a university. Let him *reason* and *argue* with those who are qualified to follow an argument, as did Paul with Felix; let him mildly *persuade* others, as Paul did Agrippa: to the guilty, let him show Jehovah in his terrors, and

the eye of fire whose watchfulness no spirit can ever flee: to the lowly, let him show Jehovah in his mercies, and the city which hath foundations, and the joys of the new Jerusalem. Let his language at one time be plain and simple, adorned and metaphorical at another, so that a variety of hearers may, each in his turn, receive the truth in that form in which they can best digest it; for is not the great end of our ministry the salvation of souls, the winning them *from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto the kingdom of God?* And are not all means equally lawful that lead to that holy consummation? And how, if we obstinately persevere in *one* style, can we hope to dispense the gospel to all the members of a *mixed* assembly, wherein we must expect to find every graduated shade of perception, from the highest degree of intellectual refinement, down to the lowest point of mental uncultivation?

III. And now, having discoursed both on the *doctrines* of Paul, and on his *manner* of presenting them, suffer me to advert to the last, not least, point of my discourse, the *moral qualities*, which, under the divine influence, contributed so signally to his success. These he has himself summed up in one comprehensive verse: *Moreover*, he says, *it is required in stewards that they be found FAITHFUL.*

The two great points which this implies are, *sincerity and independence.*

(15.) 1. Faithfulness implies perfect *sincerity*, and this was the great characteristic of the mind of Paul. Even before he was converted, his very persecutions arose from the sincerity with which he believed Christianity a fable, and its author an impostor ; and the vast *energy* which he brought to bear on this erroneous conviction, marked him as a subject for extraordinary conversion, peculiarly suited to the times in which he lived, and worthy the signal interposition that was vouchsafed. From the day of that conversion, you all know what unnumbered perils he underwent in the name of Christ, and how affectingly he alludes to them in various parts of his letters, not to magnify himself, but to hold forth an example, and show the grace of God.

(16.) One remarkable instance ought to be mentioned here ; for it is a rock on which many sacred orators have been shipwrecked. Paul was not one of those ignorant fishermen of Galilee, who could only speak or write from the remembrance of their heavenly Master's words. Paul, as there is abundant reason to believe, had in his youth enjoyed all the advantages of an accomplished education, and was versed in all the scholastic lore and sophistical subtilty of the times. For the refined and voluptuous Corinthians these things had a peculiar charm ; and had Paul sought his own glory, he would have addressed them

accordingly. And now mark how he alludes to that circumstance :

*And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God, for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified ; . . . for after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom ; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God ; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

(17.) From this sublime passage let every Christian minister take his cue. Woe to that preacher who dares forget that his ministry is valuable only so far as he is *a steward of God's mysteries* ! Woe, I say, to him who preaches not Jesus Christ, but himself ! This is not serving the Lord. This is the part of a mean hypocrite, wrapped up in his own vain glory, and bent on a perishable, instead of an eternal aim ! What though he should be gifted with the most transcendent genius that heaven ever yet allotted to mortal man ; what though all the visions of speculative fancy, and all



the chambers of intellectual imagery should open upon his eye in variegated beauty, though the fire of poetry should circulate through all his veins, and the spirit of prophecy surround him with its gorgeous dreams, though his vivid imagination should burst the boundaries of space, and urge her daring flight beyond the furthest heaven, though the splendour of his eloquence should dazzle the very angels, and emblazon the burning throne of Deity with such a lustre and such a halo as never yet earth-born words pourtrayed, though his eye should flash forth lightnings, and his voice be as many waters, and his countenance as the sun shining in his strength, yet would all this vain glory fade away like the loveliness of a fleeting song, of no more real value than the murmur of a *sounding brass*, or the music of a *tinkling cymbal*; and his preaching, all beautiful but all powerless, would resemble those Egyptian tombs, where splendid decorations hide the putridity of ages—all majesty without, all rottenness within!

Not by fine words, but by *sincerity*, did the apostles Christianize the world. Not by fine words, but by sincerity, do our missionaries convert the heathen. Not by fine words, but by sincerity, will a minister influence a Christian congregation. In this armour we must be clad, or we are *unfaithful stewards*. The loftiest flights of genius are worthless, unless TRUTH sustain them.

He that is deeply convinced, will convince others.  
 He that feels, makes another feel. *He that speaks  
 FROM the heart, speaks also TO the heart.*

2. The other essential feature of the character of Paul, as illustrated here, is his *courage*, and his noble *independence*. Nor can the contrast between a heathen and a Christian orator be placed in a more conspicuous light, than it is by this portion of his address.

(18.) Imagine, my brethren, one of the sages of ancient Greece, (and Corinth had been the theatre where many such had displayed their talents) imagine him, I say, gathering round him, in some temple of Jupiter or of Vesta, the most intellectual part of that highly civilized city, (where extreme refinement had brought, as is too common, vice and luxury in its train) and proposing to them a course of lectures and philosophical disquisitions on the nature of the Gods, on the essence of things, on the power of fate, on the immortality of the soul, and on a probable state of moral retribution after death. We will admit that he might find many hearers capable of feeling their attention arrested by the grandeur of the theme. We will imagine this philosopher to be, as some of them undoubtedly were, one raised far above the scale of ordinary men by his superior conduct and comparative purity, no less than by the resources of his mind ; and we will suppose

the youth of Corinth or of Athens looking upon him with some degree of veneration. Still, I may ask, would not this man's first appeal to his hearers have been couched in language very different to this? Is it likely it would have breathed that tone of lofty *independence* which is here asserted by Paul, and which every *faithful* gospel preacher is entitled, on the same grounds, to claim?

The heathen orator knew that, in his self-imposed task, he depended for support entirely on his hearers, and that their sudden caprice might upset all his *authority*, for that authority had no where to cast an anchor; it rested on no divine commission; it was tenable only at their will and pleasure. Moreover, to him the applause of men was the breath of life; earthly fame was the meteor ever glittering before him, and he knew not if he durst aspire to any other reward should that one fail. Such was the fate of Aristides, exiled because he was too just; such that of Socrates, "Athena's wisest son," whom Opinion, as she turned her giddy wheel, made on one day her god, and on the next, her martyr.

How different the Christian orator's career! Paul, writing from Ephesus to the Corinthians whose church he had founded, and among whom he had dwelt two years to consolidate his spiritual conquests, boldly reproves them for their dissen-

sions and animosities, directs them to eject an unworthy member of the church, lays broadly down those high doctrines of faith that confound the pride of human reason, ironically inquires : *Where is the wise ? where is the scribe ? where is the disputer of this world ? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?*—makes it his boast, and the test of his commission, that he comes not, like those heathen sages to whom their ears had been long accustomed, to adorn what he had to say with the gewgaw tinsel of sophistry, and the pomp of artificial rhetoric, but declares that *his speech and his preaching was not by enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and in power, that their faith might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God* ; and then, instead of courting their applause, emphatically adds : *But with me it is a very small thing that I be judged of you, or of man's judgment—yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself ; yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* From a sage who had spoken, however wisely, the mere conjectures of his own mind, such language would never have been borne : it would have been the height of presumption : for every hearer had the same right to set up his own conjectures in opposition to his. Invested with no mission, the ambassador of no sovereign, the bearer of no oracle, the vehicle of

no communication from heaven to earth ; to his hearers he stood responsible, and they had a clear right to judge him. But Paul comes as the bearer of a heavenly message, assigned to him by the voice of God in the vision of Damascus ; and therefore he disclaims mere earthly judges, and cares not who says, *I am of Paul, or I of Cephas, or I of Apollos*, so long as he knows himself *a faithful steward* ; for *he that judgeth him is the Lord*.

(19.) In like manner, my Christian brethren, the lowest servant of the Most High, when he stands before you in the sacred character of a *minister of Christ*, is entitled in his Master's name to that respect for his mission that it would ill befit him to claim on any other grounds—for he knows himself to be a frail and fallible man, laden with the same infirmities, beset by the same temptations, liable to the same errors, as those whom he addresses—he well knows his need of prayer, and vigilance, and anxiety, lest his familiarity with sacred things should lessen their effect upon him, lest the vain pride of learning should be *a thorn in his flesh*, and *lest by any means, while preaching to others, he himself should be a cast-away*—but he knows also that, if the Lord will, not only the vessels of silver and of gold, but the meanest earthen vessel may be an instrument of praise ; he knows that the commission of Paul to Timothy

is addressed to him, and to every one who has received his ordination in the same way that the first successors of the Apostles did—and that, while, as a man, all lowliness and humility become him, yet as a preacher, he may *exhort, and reprove, and rebuke with authority*, because he speaks not for himself, but from the oracles of God.

(20.) Let then the minister of Christ, when hereafter he shall set forth, in a series of discourses, his views of the gracious covenant of your redemption, claim your indulgence, if ever his expositions should appear to clash with some favourite tenet or feeling of your own ; and, ere you condemn him, look well if his views be not borne out, not by isolated texts that may be construed and twisted, some one way, and some another,—but by the general spirit and tenor of Holy writ ; for to that, and that only, will he confidently appeal ; beseeching you, in the concluding words of the text, to *judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts ; and then shall every man have praise of God.*

(21.) And now, my Christian brethren, I have trespassed at great length upon your patience, because I thought it my duty, in this first meeting, to open fully and unreservedly my views, both as to the main doctrines of our faith, and as to the

manner of expounding them. I have not looked to this or that party, for I deem it unworthy of a Christian minister to acknowledge any party, or allow human passions a part in that religion which was intended to control our passions altogether. *I have looked only to my Bible, to my conscience, and to my God!* and here, in the face of that God, and in the face of this congregation, I renew my ordination vows, to turn neither to the right nor to the left, to keep on in one course *through evil report and good report, and to know but this among you, CHRIST JESUS, and Him crucified.*

(22.) But though *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, it is God, and God only, who giveth, or withholdeth, the increase.* I exhort you therefore, brethren, to join me with your hearts in fervent prayer to the throne of grace, that not only the seed sown on this day may not have fallen on a rock, but that it may be the forerunner of that which may *bring forth fruit a hundred fold*—that your minister, albeit a weak mortal as yourselves, may be strong in the might imparted from on high; that the cause of eternal truth may not suffer in his hands: that, when he blows the trumpet in Zion, he may startle the dull ear of worldly apathy from its listless and lethargic dream—that when he sounds the alarm, it may awaken to a life of righteousness some who are dead and lost in trespasses and sins—and that he may lift aloft the

blazing torch of Revelation, not to make it glare with terrifying lustre, but shine with a mild benignant beam, to guide the weary pilgrim into the paths of peace, and scatter the rays of immortal light over those who now sit in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death !

(23.) Hear Thou from heaven, Spirit of the Eternal God ! Spirit that overcomest the world ! Spirit of love, and life, and immortality ! Hear Thou from Heaven, and bend from Thy viewless height, to look down on this temple, and this congregation gathered in Thy name ! Instruct the meanest steward of Thy mysteries, “illumine what in him is dark,” and wash the stain of his infirmities in the blood of the everlasting Covenant, that he may be *faithful*, that his flock may be enlightened, and that in Thy great day he may meet Thee in the air, presenting them to Thee, and to the Lamb that sitteth on the throne !

THE END.



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**THE ENLARGEMENT AND REPAIR OF CHURCHES:**

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# S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S CHAPEL, IN BRECON,

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1836,

ON OCCASION OF THE

KING'S LETTER

IN AID OF

THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY FOR BUILDING AND  
ENLARGING CHURCHES, &c.

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BY THE

REV. RICHARD DAVIES, M.A.

ARCHDEACON AND VICAR OF BRECON.

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A

## S E R M O N,

&c.

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2 SAMUEL xxiv. 24.

*And the king said unto Araunah, Nay ; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price : neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.*

THAT the solemn duties of God's public service ought to be performed in fit and adequate places, is a sentiment that seems to have existed in man from the very first ages in which he was called into being.

The sons of Adam, soon after his removal from Paradise, had places whither they were directed to bring their sacrifices, as we learn from the history of Cain and Abel. The patriarchs used altars, mountains, and groves, for the same purposes.

In the vast wilderness of Syria and Arabia, when

the people of God had no settled habitation, they were commanded by their Heavenly Instructor to make a moveable tabernacle, which, for the forty years' pilgrimage in the wastes of Syria and Arabia, they carried with them, and placed in and about their daily encampments. When God had chosen Jerusalem, He fixed upon Mount Moriah, there to have His standing habitation made.

After the many victories of David, when he had rest from all his enemies, we read, that it grieved him to think that "he should dwell in an house of cedar, and the ark of God still remain within curtains." He therefore piously resolved to erect a temple to the Power which had caused him to prosper, and was only deterred from carrying his resolution into effect, by the express command of God, revealed by the mouth of His prophet. Still anxious to manifest the sincerity of his intention, he invited all his subjects to bountiful contributions;—he collected together an immense quantity of materials, "with all his might," in order to forward the erection of the noble structure, which was afterwards completed by his son; assigning this reason for the magnitude of his preparations—"The palace is not for man, but for the Lord God." And when he saw the readiness with which the people seconded his pious efforts, we are told, that "David the king rejoiced with great joy."

An uniform regard to the purity of Divine worship was, perhaps, the most striking feature in

David's character. It was this sentiment which made him, on the remarkable occasion recorded in my text, refuse "to offer to the Lord his God of that which had cost him nothing."

That this piety was approved of where it was most desirable to meet with approbation, is manifest from the circumstance handed down to us, that God, the Almighty and All-powerful God of heaven and earth, condescended to distinguish the magnificent structure in Jerusalem (thus erected by the joint efforts of David and Solomon) with a perpetual miracle—a visible proof of His own immediate presence, which was not withdrawn from it, till the continued wickedness of an abandoned and gainsaying people called for the utter destruction of that splendid edifice. (You perceive, my dear brethren, that I allude to the Schechinah, or manifestation of God's immediate presence, placed over the mercy-seat of the altar in the temple at Jerusalem.)

To prove that a similar respect prevailed among the Jewish nation, when they returned from their merited bondage in Babylon, I need only refer those who hear me to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, where a full account is given of the re-establishment of the law, and of the building of the second temple—that temple, which was made more glorious than the first, by the presence and preaching of the Son of God.

Besides this temple, there were in other parts of

the land, and even in Jerusalem, no small number of synagogues or places of public worship. Our Saviour and His Apostles frequented both the one and the other. It would be superfluous to enlarge upon the numerous synagogues within the province of Judea, which existed in the time of our Saviour and His Apostles, many of which are recorded in the New Testament, as you all ought to know. It is, in fact, well ascertained, that there were no less than four hundred and eighty places of worship in the city of Jerusalem alone. Whether it was in imitation of the Jews, or from a principle of their own natural law teaching them that whatever God they worshipped should have a convenient place appropriated for his service, certain it is, that the very heathens themselves did generally erect superb temples and altars, not only in their most populous cities, but almost every where throughout the world; while only one of the numerous sects of philosophers rejected the use of places of worship, and that, most probably, from the singular dissenting humour of that sect, which (with some of modern days) thought the general practice of others a laudable and sufficient ground for their contrary opinion.

The practice of Christians, even in their earliest age, is clear, from a continued series of the best and most authentic historians. We find, by an expression of St. Paul, that a church was established at Corinth even in his days; and we know

that the primitive Christians separated places for God's public service, from time to time, wherever the bitter persecutions of the age did not restrain them, for they were often compelled to attend secret places of worship, and to seek not the fittest but the safest places they could find.

That succeeding ages were never without places for divine service, is questioned by no well-informed reasonable man—by no man open to conviction ; although the poverty of the first converts to Christianity, and the want of encouragement from the higher powers of this world which they constantly experienced, prevented then the erection of stately fabrics by them. But when the dreadful storm of persecution had blown over, and the churches had rest and peace, temples arose out of the ruins of their old foundations : no cost was spared to show a cheerful and sincere affection to the honour of their God and Saviour : nothing was thought too dear to part with for a purpose so laudable ; and the whole Christian world seemed to triumph in having occasion to pour out their gifts for a work so sacred. And surely, my beloved brethren, it is most suitable, most decent, and most fit, for the greatness and majesty of Jesus Christ (now no longer in the form of a servant, but Lord of all), that He should be worshipped in the beauty of holiness, “not served with that which costs us nothing.”

God, the absolute Lord of all, has given the earth



and all that it inherits to the sons of men ; and shall not they, in return, dedicate some portion of its fruits to His service ?

This sentiment was felt so strongly in the earliest days of our Church, that very extensive contributions were generally appropriated for the erection and enlargement of places for Christian worship. Pilgrimages were commonly performed to the principal shrines ; thus offerings to the different fabrics were brought from distant provinces sufficient to erect and preserve those stately edifices, which, even at this distant period, attest, in their decay, the unsparing munificence of those who gave them. Bequests were generally made by will, and large estates were settled for these laudable purposes ; and messengers were continually employed to go about with relics and indulgences to collect the contributions of the pious. The greatest zeal, attended by the richest and most liberal donations, was employed in giving new degrees of magnificence and of beauty to those sacred edifices.

At the Reformation, it unhappily occurred that those revenues which had been appropriated for the purposes of maintaining the decency of public worship, and the repairs of those places which had been so munificently endowed (when separated from the abuses made of them by the Popish powers), were so far from being restored to the truly useful and pious purposes they had served before, that instead of their being applied to the

support and encouragement of the parochial clergy, and the necessary accommodation of those who attended their instruction (the true and proper uses which ought to have been made of them), they were, in fact, for the most part, disposed of by the powers in being, from time to time, among the laity, and became what are called temporal qualities; nay, the arrangement was so injudiciously—I had almost said so impiously—made, that the most populous parishes were those that were left chiefly deprived of their emoluments. The largest towns became vicarages, and the estates that had been settled upon the fabrics of their churches were disposed of for purposes not connected with the establishment, and they so continue to the hour in which I am speaking to you, my brethren.

Nothing here said is intended, in the least, to impeach or bring into dispute the legal right of any persons possessing tithes or other revenues that were formerly of a spiritual nature, and solely applied to spiritual purposes, but are now, by the laws of this land, become the properties of those in possession of them. What I say concerning them is designed to have no other tendency, than truly to state the condition of the poorer clergy, in order to abate (if possible) that spirit of unwillingness to contribute to their assistance which is so visible in some, and to raise in others (what, at present, would be very seasonable) a desire to aid that

charity, which you find, by the Proclamation which has been read in our Church, stands in need of a royal heart to encourage it, and which it is hoped, as long as there is occasion, will never want royal hands to support it.

When a rapidly-increasing population calls loudly for our exertions, and the example of our dissenting brethren in multiplying their places of assembly becomes almost a reproach to us, I will not believe that the members of our Church Establishment will be lukewarm in their endeavours to supply their portion of the expences that are avowedly necessary for the accommodation of their poorer brethren.

If your desires be “to do good and to communicate;” if it be your care, as “ye have opportunity, to do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith,”—then we say, bring your gifts liberally to the treasury of the Lord—lay your offerings upon this pure altar. Promote, with your best efforts, that special object which is brought before you this day. Let the pretensions and claims of other charities be what they may, there are few that call more imperatively for the aid of those who are true patriots, wise citizens of the world, and conscientious members of the Church of England. The worship of God is the necessary result of a belief in His providence, and a sense of our own infirmities. And the public worship of God originates in the social nature of

man, in our mutual wants, and our joint dependence on that Almighty Being who is the Father of us all. Connected as we are, from the peasant to the king, in one great chain, where not a link can be broken without disorder to the whole, all exposed to numerous evils, all subject to disease and death, we feel instinctively the force of social worship.

We perceive, before reason can take occasion to admonish us, the necessity of uniting in prayer, of confessing our sins in the general assembly, of deprecating the divine wrath on the prospect of calamity, of imploring assistance in difficulties and distress, and of offering up thanksgivings to Him who has rescued us from dangers, and whose manifold blessings we daily and hourly enjoy. That this is the universal sense of mankind is evident from the temples set apart for the adoration of God in all ages and nations. If we appeal to the times preceding the promulgation of the Gospel, not only the civilized people of antiquity, but the most ignorant and barbarous are known to have assembled, as gratitude or piety suggested, for the purpose of paying their devotions to the great Governor and Preserver of the world. It was a natural impulse distinguishing the sentiments and feelings of every unvitiated mind.

“If you look through the world,” says an ancient author (Plutarch), “you may find cities without walls, and palaces without princes, but you will not see a city without a temple.” In the numerous

temples of Greece and Rome we are presented with little else than the pageantry of procession or the pomp of sacrifices under the conduct of kings and priests ; and though such may have been apparently invented to overawe the multitude, and render them subservient to the will of the legislator, yet the nature of man must teach us that they derived their birth and aftergrowth from the religious principle, a principle which is never satisfied with solitary acts of devotion, but which compels us all to worship God in society.

The history of the ancient governments would abundantly confirm a truth which was never doubted, till human nature was viewed through the false light of philosophy. On this topic, I need scarcely instance the Jews, who were more closely united by religion than any other nation upon earth,—who are represented as one body of worshippers doing homage to their Almighty Sovereign ; and whose devotional energies are proclaimed by the mouths of all the prophets, in such expressions as these :—“ How amiable are thy tabernacles (says the Psalmist), O Lord of Hosts ; I had rather be a door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.”

If such then were the sense, the feelings, the practice of the Gentiles and the Jews, shall Christians wax cold in their devotions to the God of Love ? Shall we, whose condescending Saviour assumed our nature, and joined us in fraternal fel-

lowship? Shall we, whose kind Mediator has introduced us to “his God and our God, to his Father and our Father;” shall we languish in the performance of our duty; less fervent in spirit, or less correct in conduct?

Social worship, whilst it brings together persons of various conditions, denominations, and characters, must sensibly operate to the good of all, in discouraging the pretensions of pride, in dissipating the follies of the vain, in softening resentments, and in subduing every passion that might disturb our peace. In informing the poor man that, in the house of his God, he is upon a level with the wealthiest around him, as a fellow-servant of the Lord; in teaching him contentment; in inspiring him with gratitude.

If we consider, indeed, that although there are worldly distinctions between us established for the wisest ends, and connected with the temporal interests of an unstable scene, yet, when we assemble in this place, we meet together with the same interests and with the same views, that we are all created by Him “who made us what we are;” and formed in the same mould, are equally the objects of His providence;—that we are all adopted as children of the same Father;—and all equally redeemed from death by the blood and sufferings of his Son;—that we are all heirs of the same promises, and candidates for the same immortality. Thus thinking, doth not every earthly competition

appear as less than nothing in the scale of value ? Does it not vanish amidst contemplations so sublime and glorious, as smoke before the wind ? And when we think that we are mutually employed in praying to the Almighty for each other ; when the humble in station sees his richer neighbour engaged in supplication to God for his welfare, both temporal and eternal ; and when he is conscious that he himself at the same instant utters the like petition, is it possible that such a thought can arise in his heart without effect ? If he had not cheerfully acquiesced in the allotments of Providence, can he now repine at his poverty any longer ? If he had looked up with envy to the possessor of plenty, can he now cherish one unbenevolent, one unkindly feeling ? And can his rich neighbour, on the other hand, regard with an eye of fastidiousness his poor companion in the worship of God ? If he permit the idea of their relative situation and their reciprocal good offices to have their just effect upon his conduct and his feelings, will he not rather respect and venerate the lowly disciple of their common Saviour, thus occupied in his behalf, and (as the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much) thus drawing down blessings upon his head ?

The very prayer which our Saviour himself composed for our use, is, in itself, a social prayer. It suits not the recluse, breathing enmity against his fellow mortals ; it is ill adapted to the selfish or the

vain ; it communicates in one impressive term, " Our Father," the most interesting sense of our relation to our Creator and to one another ; and it shows, in every word, the indispensable connection between the love of God and the love of man.

In the two sacraments of our Church you must also perceive evident intimation that public worship is a part of Christian duty, unless you have discovered that Baptism is a solitary rite, or that the holy communion has no reference to society.

If we recur to example, we all know that our Saviour often went to the Temple at Jerusalem, and that the Apostles and primitive Christians used to assemble at stated times, and at certain places, for the purpose of religious worship, industrious in establishing Churches wherever Christianity prevailed.

Their example you are now, my brethren, called upon to bear in mind. The religious object which it is my desire, by your aid, on this day to recommend and advance, is calculated to extend its uses into every parish of the kingdom. Much has been done already, and much more yet remains to be done. The wants of the public are notoriously urgent, they are imperatively convincing in the place in which I stand, for the population of this parish has increased so largely that many, at least two-thirds of those of whom it is now my duty to address, are necessarily absent for want of room. I doubt not, I have no cause to doubt, their affec-



tion. I repeat it, my brethren, many are absent from want of room, and from that alone.

Our intention cannot be mistaken; we have here no interest to serve which you do not equally possess. We call upon you to assist a Society which has already been the instrument of effecting much extended good, and which at present is arrested in the execution of its pious and charitable designs by the exhausted state of its funds—exhausted by the unsparing liberality by which it has been bestowed. The experience of every individual must furnish him with too many instances of the lamentable evils which are to be traced to the want of sufficient accommodation in Churches belonging to the Establishment, and of the urgent necessity which should induce every member of the Church of England cordially to unite in some general effort to provide the means by which alone an effectual remedy can be applied. To prescribe any fixed or certain sum for bounty would be an infringement upon the glorious character of a free-will offering. Every man, therefore, will now give as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly we will trust, nor of necessity, for let us bear in mind that those who honour Him He will honour, that on occasions such as this more especially, He loveth, He cannot but love, a cheerful giver.

But I should be greatly indeed wanting both in gratitude and in duty, if I omitted on this occasion to bring to your remembrance the past conduct of

the pious managers of the institution which now solicits the aid of your contributions in its support. You heard in the letters which were read to you last Sunday, an abstract of their general distribution, and their imperious demand upon your continued, your unsparing bounty ; and it is my delightful province to record the special favours conferred upon the Churches intrusted to my charge. To the parish of Garthbrengy a larger portion has been appropriated than to any other in the kingdom under similar circumstances, and that church has been rebuilt from its foundation without one farthing charged upon the rates. Numerous other churches have been altered or rebuilt, and I look forward, with the confidence of assured persuasion, that equal if not further aid will be extended to the edifice in which I now stand a willing advocate : for I make no doubt that I shall be able, at an early day, to lay before you a full and satisfactory statement, showing that this church may be rebuilt upon so extended a scale as to afford abundant accommodation for the wants of this parish, and at no compulsory expense beyond those repairs to the roof, which, by the existing laws, you are bound to carry into effect. To the improvements in the parent church of these annexed parishes, one hundred pounds were appropriated, but this I leave to the observations which may be there made in this evening's service.

I will detain you no longer. The attention

which you have given to what I have said, and the continued kindness which I have received during a ministry of six-and-thirty years, convince me that I may look with confidence to the extent of your beneficence, without a doubt that it will at least produce its usual and its true proportion.

On this occasion you cannot exceed the measure of the demand. Bear in mind that the retrenchment of one superfluous meal, or the relinquishment of one useless, if not unlicensed party, by every wealthy individual whom I see around me, will more than provide a seat in this chapel for a thousand poor individuals, whose affections are bound up with the welfare of our Establishment, and whom nothing but want of room has hitherto excluded from its precincts. It was the pious sentiment of the good and gracious monarch whom we revered for more than fifty years, that the poorest man in his dominions should have the Bible and the Prayer-book in his hands. My prayer shall be, and has been for a period of time scarcely less extended, that every individual in this town and neighbourhood shall have a seat in the Established Churches, where he may hear those books expounded. If he be naked we will clothe him, if he be hungry we will give him food, if he be sick we have a house provided where he shall be visited.

Upon such exertions the whole Godhead will look down with approbation. We shall be received into the glorious mansions of Heaven by the

almighty and all-merciful Father of Heaven and Earth, through the intercession of the atoning Son ; and the comforts of God's Holy Spirit will be shed in peace eternal upon every one amongst us.  
**AMEN.**

**THE END.**



**THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR:**

**A SERMON.**



4  
**THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR:**

A

**S E R M O N,**

**PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S CHAPEL, IN BRECON,**

**ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1836.**

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BY THE

**REV. RICHARD DAVIES, M.A.**

**ARCHDEACON AND VICAR OF BRECON.**

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A

## S E R M O N,

&c.

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TITUS i. 9.

*Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught,  
that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort  
and to convince the gainsayers.*

CHRISTIAN people would be far more likely to escape the attacks of unbelievers, if they could be brought to agree among themselves. But unhappily we too often see, with regret, that religion, instead of being considered as a common cause, is so split into factions, that the general interest is neglected, not to say, in some instances, nearly betrayed: and, while the liege subjects of the same sovereign are carrying on civil war for petty objects and inconsiderable spots of ground, that strength, which should have been concentrated for the general defence, is spent in mutual skirmishes, and mischievous though

unimportant hostilities, and that veneration of course is forfeited with which even the acknowledged enemy would have been compelled to behold an united Church.

The faithful Christian pastor, however, is firm in his attachments, though not exacting in his requisitions. He is Catholic, but not Latitudinarian,—he is tolerant, not from indifference, but from principle. He contemplates, with admiration, the venerable fabric under whose shelter he is protected—he adheres to it, not so much from habit as from affection,—his adherence is the effect of conviction, otherwise his tenacity might be prejudice. It is founded in veneration, strengthened by reflection, and confirmed by experience.

But though he contemplates our ecclesiastical institutions with filial reverence himself, he allows for the effect of education, habit, and conscience in others, who do not view them with his eyes. He is sorry for those who refuse to enter into her portal; he is more sorry for those who depart out of it;—but far more concerned is he for those who remain within her pale, with a temper hostile to her interests, and principles foreign to her genius, with a conduct unsanctified by her spirit.

Like a true friend, he delights not to expatiate upon any imperfection she may have acquired; but he will not, like an absurd friend, count upon any imperfection as an excellence. Persuaded that a mole or a pimple is no material diminution of

beauty, he will no more magnify them into a deformity, than he will deny their existence.

His mind is so occupied with essential points, and so satisfied with their substantial worth, that he relinquishes whatever is of no vital importance, to those microscopic eyes which, being able to take in only the diminutive, value themselves on the detection of specks as a discovery of their own, though keener eyes had discerned them long before, but slighted them as insignificant.


Satisfied that it is the best of all Churches which exist, he never troubles himself to inquire, if it be the best that is possible. In the Church of England he is contented with excellence, and is satisfied to wait for perfection till he is admitted a member of the Church triumphant in Heaven.

The more he examines Scripture (and he is habitually examining it), the more he is persuaded that the principles of the Church are identical with the word of God ; while he is enabled, by the same examination, to drink more deeply of that Spirit of love which warms his heart with kindness towards every conscientious Christian who, on some points, thinks differently. His attachment is defined, but his charity knows no end.

He observes that the loudest clamour for the Establishment is not always raised by the most pious, nor by the most affectionate of her disciples ; he therefore does not rejoice when he sees her honoured name hoisted as a political signal, by those

who are careless of her spiritual prosperity : and he sometimes finds no inconsiderable difference between those who toast her in the unlicensed revels of convivial excess, and those who study to promote her best interests, though the former obtain the reputation, which the other are only desirous of deserving.

He evinces his own affection by his zeal in defending her cause when attacked, and by his prudence in never causelessly provoking the attack. Anxious that the walls of the Sacred Temple should be impregnable, he is still more anxious that her altars should burn with undecaying brightness ; and that while her guardians are properly watching over the security of the one, the flame of the other be not extinguished. He gives the most unequivocal proof that he attends to her doctrines, by never separating them from her precepts, while he endeavours to incorporate both into his practice. Adorning them by his example, recommending them in his writings, and illustrating them in his conversation. If he produce little sensation among the intemperate, who exhibit their fidelity to the Church by always representing her as on the very verge of destruction, yet he would, were the danger present, go greater lengths in her defence than some of her more declamatory champions. Nay, he does more now to avert her ruin, than they who seem to make her safety dependant upon their clamour. If he be not perpetually predicting open war, he is watch-



ful against the hollow security of a false peace. The most difficult, as well as the most important part of his case, is not more to vindicate against avowed enemies, than against the friend who is at once vociferous and supine. Though a good lover, he is a bad hater ; and it is this defect of hatred which, in a certain class, brings his love into suspicion. He has observed some who evince their attachment by their violence against what they disapprove, rather than by cultivating that right Christian spirit, which is first pure, and then peaceable, and which, if it be not peaceable, is not, cannot be pure.

These are more remarkable for their dread of external evils, than for their solicitude for the promotion of internal piety. Their religion consists rather in repulsion than attraction.

On the other hand, it must be observed, that the faithful Christian pastor has none of that pliancy which, in this relaxed age, obtains in a different quarter, the praise of liberality from those who, thinking one religion almost as good as another, are of consequence tolerant of any, because they are indifferent to ALL. He has learnt from the errors of two opposite parties, that fanaticism teaches men to despise religion, and bigotry to hate it. He knows that his candour is deemed levity by the prejudiced, and that his firmness is called intolerance by the irreligious. There is, however, no ambiguity in his moderation ; and he never, for the sake of

popularity with either party, leaves it doubtful upon what ground he takes his stand. Nor does he ever renounce a right principle, because one party abuses it, or another denies its existence. And, while he deprecates the assumption of names by impostors, it does not alter his opinion of the things which they originally signified ; for instance, he does not think patriotism is a romance, nor disinterestedness a chimera, nor fervent piety a delusion, nor charity unorthodox, nor a saint necessarily an hypocrite.

He observes amongst his acquaintance, that there are some who sedulously fix the brand of fanaticism on certain doctrines, which both the Bible and the Church not only recognize, but consider as fundamentals—as the key-stone of the sacred arch, on the strength of which the whole superstructure rests.

These doctrines, while they eject them from their own creed, they confound in the creed of others, with certain dangerous opinions which they are by no means necessarily connected with, though they uniformly charge those who adopt the one class with invariably maintaining the other. It is in vain that the persons so charged disavow these opinions ; it is to no purpose that they desire to be permitted to know what they themselves hold, and what they themselves reject.

The faithful Christian minister however, undaunted by clamour, and unmoved by insinuation, tenaciously maintains the doctrine of human apostacy ; of salvation by grace, through faith in Christ,

and of the influence of God's Holy Spirit in renovating the heart of man.

In her avowal of man's inborn corruption he insists that the Church of England is most emphatical. He reads the pointed and explicit confession with which her service opens, and he holds the same language with some others to whom the Church is a higher authority than the Bible with regard to a subject next in connection with that of human weakness—I allude to the agency of the Divine Spirit. He remarks that both these doctrines are recognised in every prayer and in every office : that they are especially acknowledged in the collects, those beautiful effusions of devotion, which, for strength of expression, condensation of sense, and neatness of composition, not only surpass every thing of the age in which they were composed ; but they remain unrivalled in the similar addresses of our own time, whose best praise it is, that in this period of fine writing, our petitionary forms are accounted more or less excellent, as they approach nearer or recede further from these models. He bears in mind their self-abasing acknowledgments.—“ Thou God who seest that we put not our trust in any thing that we do,”—“ O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee,”—“ Because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fall,”—“ Grant that we who cannot do any thing which is good without Thee, may, by Thee, be enabled to



live according to Thy will,"—"Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit,"—"Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee,"—"Grant us the help of Thy grace."

But there would be no end of enumeration. The same doctrines run through, and are incorporated with the whole Liturgy. To get rid of them, mere omissions would be altogether insufficient, we must tear up the whole web—we must weave another: we must weave it too with new materials; for the old threads would retain the colour of the old doctrines, and communicate their original character to the new piece.

It is not only the old form that must be new cast, but new principles that must be infused; a new train of sentiments must be adopted;—in short, a new religion (if religion it can be called) must be substituted.

The Christian pastor observes that it is a proof of the different views of our cotemporaries on this subject from those of the Primitive Church, that while, with some of the former, divine influence is a theme of derision, rather than of reverence; in the other, whatever was pure, and holy, and good, was ascribed to its operation. At the same time, being a diligent reader of Ecclesiastical History, as well as an accurate observer of what passes before his eyes, he is aware of what abuses have been, and



still are practised ; and what deceits are carried on under the specious pretence of being the “ Works of the Spirit.”

The importance of the doctrine accounts for the many imitations and counterfeits to which it is exposed ; and he knows that the abuse of a thing is always pernicious in proportion to its excellence.

The Old and New Testament abound with instances. To those in the former St. Peter recurs in order to guard his converts from those of the latter. “ There were,” says he, “ false prophets among the people, even as there are false teachers among you.” Another Apostle warns his hearers against the mischiefs which he himself had seen produced by these impious and unlicensed pretenders, by instructing them “ To try the spirits whether they be of God.” To try their spirits, not by putting them upon supernatural works, but to try them by a more infallible rule, by “ examining the doctrine which they teach.” That is by their invariable conformity with Scripture. He knows that the same rule, and the same necessity, subsists now, in as full force, as when the injunction was originally given.

He is aware that it is necessary not only to be accurate in the use of his own terms, but to be also on his guard against being misled by the inaccuracy of the terms employed by others. He therefore takes care to ascertain the character and the temper of the man by whom any ambiguity of expression

is used, as well as of him to whom the term is applied. Without this caution he could not decide upon the justness of the application. Even the impious founder of the Epicurean sect could say, "A man cannot live happily without living wisely."

Now, though every man, whatever be his principles, must assent to this truth, as a general proposition; yet, the phrase "living wisely," conveyed a very different idea in the schools of an atheistical philosopher, to what it would have conveyed to the follower of Zeno, and more especially to the disciple of Jesus Christ.

Enthusiasm is one of these ambiguous terms. The Christian pastor is prudent on a principle which is sometimes denied. He considers that prudence, in an ardent character, is more likely to be the effect of grace than of zeal, because in the exercise of zeal he is indulging his natural temper, whereas, in the other, he is subduing it: and he has found, that to resist a propensity is generally more the effect of principle, than to gratify it. Thence he infers that, if resistance be a work of grace, the sluggish and the cold-hearted may judge of the conquest of their own nature, by a superinduced zeal; while he is conquering his own vehemence by a superinduced prudence. Thus the same truth is illustrated by opposite instances.

Against enthusiasm it is unnecessary to caution the discreet and enlightened pastor. He avoids it as naturally as a wise man avoids folly—as a sober

man shuns extravagance. But then, it is the thing itself, and not what bigots call so—it is the real being and not the spectre, against which he is upon his guard : for, not being superstitious, he is not terrified by phantoms and goblins ; he laments when he encounters a real enthusiast, because he knows that, even if he be honest, he is pernicious. But, although he thinks him highly blameable, he does not think him worse than murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers. He thinks enthusiasm mischievous, but he does not think it worse than impiety—worse than intemperance—worse than infidelity—worse than intolerance—worse than any other flagitious vice—especially he does not think it worse than all other vices put together. And yet this, he might be almost tempted to believe, was the case, when he sees other vices comparatively left to enjoy themselves, and this doughty enormity, imaginary as well as real, singly attacked by the combined forces of all the weapons which ought to be, in turn, applied to the whole family of sin. As he is skilful in symptoms, he takes care to ascertain evident marks of the mania, palpable diagnostics of the rabid bite, before he pronounces upon the disease, or proceeds to secure himself against the contagion.

By his well exercised judgment he can generally discover the different causes of the actual distemper. He can distinguish whether the patient be sick of a deluded imagination, or, from

having been in contact with the infected ; whether he is mismanaged by artful, or injured by ignorant pretenders ; whether the malady lie in the weakness of his natural powers, or in the vanity of his mind ; whether it be an inflammation on the brain or a tumour in the heart. Some, or all of these appearances commonly indicating the fanatical fever.

In either case he heartily subscribes to the reality and danger of the distemper ; but even then, he does not positively pronounce that the weak are wicked ; or the disordered, counterfeits.

But if, as is not seldom the case, he finds the appellation conferred only because the objects of it are deeply sensible of the unspeakable importance of religion, and the infinite value of things eternal, because they are no more afraid of feeling than of understanding the great truths of Christianity ; because they think their souls are not a property to be complimented away through fear. If he find that with all their warmth they are rational, that with all their zeal they are humble, that with all their energy they are consistent, that with all their spirituality they are soberminded ; if they obey the precepts of the gospel as faithfully as they believe its doctrines, if their religion do not lie more in profession than in performance, if they give a striking evidence of their love of God by their tenderness to their fellow-creatures, if they are as liberal to their bodily wants as those are who forget to take their souls into the account, if their piety appear as much


in their practice as in their discourse, and their prudence keep pace with their earnestness, then, he will not be forward to impute to them, as the unpardonable sin, those animated sentiments which are to themselves, peace and joy in believing, and to others, benignity, philanthropy, and kindness.

And as he does not call well-directed zeal fanaticism, nor generous ardour delusion; so he does not rank those who believe in the omnipotence of Divine grace among the enemies to virtuous action; nor does he suspect, that the advocates for strenuous exertion are sworn foes to FAITH. Nor does he ever disavow a doctrine which he has adopted on conviction, because it may happen to be associated in the mind of another man with other doctrines, which he himself cannot adopt. And as he knows something of the internal constitution of the human heart, and the nature of religious affections, he distinguishes between the sanguine temper of youth—between that warmth, which in a right turned mind, time will cool, and experience temper, and which will retain no more than a due degree of spirit, when its first effervescence has subsided. He distinguishes this spirit from that blind zeal, and headlong violence, which as they are a part of no religion, so are they a discredit to any.

He has observed, that the reason why we see such misshapen representations of religion set up for the finger of reproach or ridicule to point at, is, that the reviler has not been looking out for truth.

He has not taken his example, we will not say from the highest model, nor from the fair average of serious Christians, but he has taken it from the lowest specimen of what he has seen, and even more commonly from the distorted report of others, who were looking out for absurdity ; for he knows that where absurdity is strenuously sought, it will be found without difficulty, or if not found, it will be easily imagined. This caricature is produced as the representative of the whole body ; care being taken, however, to preserve in the portrait just resemblance enough to shew a feature or two of the real face, that the disgusting physiognomy may not prevent its being recognised. If no glimpse of likeness could be traced, it would not answer the end ; it would answer it still less, if the prevailing character of the piece were not deformity.

The Christian pastor is persuaded that, of every combination of wickedness with folly which Satan has devised, hypocrisy is the greatest, as being the most generally unprofitable. The hypocrite is sure of being the abhorrence of both sides of the question. Where his duplicity is not suspected, the world hates him for assuming the appearance of piety. God, who knows his heart, hates him for the abuse of it, and for the affectation of it. But though the pious minister of religion deprecates hypocrisy, he is cautious of suspecting it in others upon light grounds, and still more of charging it home without proof. As he is not omniscient, he cannot feel quite sure that any



man who appears more than usually pious is an hypocrite, nor does he so denominate him on this single ground : as he cannot scrutinize his heart, he judges him by his actions, and leaves him to settle his motives with his Maker. On the whole, if he meet with a man the consistency of whose life gives stronger evidence of the reality and of the depth of his religion than other men, he is reluctant in suspecting him either of hypocrisy or enthusiasm. Nay, so far from it, that he will find his own faith strengthened, his own indifference to human applause, increased, by such a living exemplification of the truth of Christianity, and he will calmly leave it to the inconsiderate and the malevolent to stigmatize the character which he reveres. They who, when they observe eminent piety and zeal much above low-water mark, insinuate that such symptoms in the more animated Christian prove his tendency to be a separatist, pay a very wretched compliment to the Established Church ; for, is not this implying that her service is not sufficiently high and enlarged to satisfy an energetic spirit ? Does it not assume that she does not possess attractions to engage, and materials to fill, and spirit to warm a devout mind ? and that a superior degree of earnestness will be in danger of driving its possessor without and beyond her pale in search of richer pastures ? Is it not virtually saying one of two things, either that a fervent piety is bad, or that the church is not good ?

But the faithful Christian pastor is so little given



to change, that he rejoices in belonging to a church, of whose formularies we have already seen how much he had to say in commendation. In these standards he rejoices to see truth as it were poured down, hedged in, and, as far as possible, in this mutable and unstable world, preserved and perpetuated. Her significant and spiritual ordinances, and the large infusion of Scripture in her offices and liturgy, secure her from the fluctuations of human opinions; so that, if even the principles of any of her ministers should degenerate, her service would nevertheless be protected from the vicissitude. No sentiments but those of her prescribed rituals can ever find their way into her desk; and the desk will always be a safe and permanent standard for the pulpit itself, as well as a test by which others may ascertain its purity.

The Christian minister, therefore, values her government for the same reason for which he values her liturgy—because it gives a definite boundary to the inclosure; never forgetting that the fruit inclosed is of deeper importance than the fence which incloses. The faithful pastor, however, always remembers, that at no very distant period, when the hedge was broken down, disorder and misrule overspread the fair vineyard.

Among other doctrines, he is an accurate studier of the doctrine of proportions in whatsoever regards the ecclesiastical institution. Though he cordially approves her forms and discipline—though he believes that they are not only essential to her

dignity, but necessary to her existence, yet he discriminates between what is subordinate and what is supreme. If the one is the body, the other is the soul. It is to her strenuously maintaining the doctrines of the New Testament, that he looks for her preservation. This is her palladium. Nor does it more resemble the fabled statue of Ilium, because, like that, it fell from heaven to earth, than in its having dropped down while the prince was building the citadel. If he adopt the liturgy for his model, it is because he perceives how completely she has adopted the Bible for hers, in never giving undue prominence to one doctrine, to the disparagement of the rest; like her, he appreciates and settles them according to their degrees of importance. Among his many reasons for venerating the Church of England, the principal is, that she is an integral and distinguished portion of the Church of Christ. In the specific he never loses sight of the general character. As a churchman he is first a Christian and then a Protestant. The ramification is so far from separating him from the root, that it unites him more closely to it. If he bear much fruit, it is because he is inserted into the true Vine. Though quick sighted to what he conceives to be the errors, he does liberal justice to whatever is valuable in other communities. In many members of those who differ from his own, more in forms of government, than in any of the essentials of doctrine, he sees powerful ability, and sound learning to admire, and much substantial piety to venerate.

Even with regard to that church, from the corruptions and spiritual tyranny of which our own has been providentially rescued, he acknowledges much excellence in those missals from which our own ritual was partly extracted. He sees in many of her writers, a genius, a sublimity, and an unction that have been very rarely surpassed. In short, he exercises charity and kindness to all sects and to all parties, except one which has lately been much animadverted upon. It is not indeed a distinct sect, for then his prudence might escape all contact with it; but it is one, whose sloth, producing the same effect which the subtilty of the Jesuits formerly produced, without giving us, like the school of Loyola, any hope of its extinction, has found means to thrust itself into every religious denomination and society in the world—the sect of the non-doers.

In these worst of sectaries, no vaunting profession of faith, no flaming display of orthodoxy, no clamour for favourite, no hostility against reprobated doctrines, no outcry for or against the church or the state, will ever raise them in his estimation. He accounts them the barren fig-tree of every community in whose soil they spring up. They may indeed claim to belong to it, but it is as the worm belongs to the root, as the canker to the bud, as the excrescence to the healthful body.

In the constitution of the Established Church the faithful pastor approves of the degrees of rank and dignity, and the gradations of income. But, if

he never entertains a desire that the highest were lower, he cannot help breathing a cordial wish that the lowest were highest.

Convinced, however, that every thing human is in its very nature imperfect, he consoles himself with the hope, a hope which is confirmed by many actual instances, that some of the most highly endowed will be examples of Christian liberality, and some of the most lowly, of patient submission. So that their several portions may, while they enable them to furnish a pattern to others, minister to their own good. But evils which he cannot remove, the faithful Christian pastor will never aggravate. He holds it criminal even to agitate questions which only fester and inflame the wounds they are meant to cure. He knows that fruitless discussion may irritate, but seldom heals. That querulous animadversions on irremediable grievances, only serve, by stirring up discontent, to excite insubordination.

He respects every order and degree among them for the Lord's sake ; and, if a case should occur in which he cannot honour the man, he will honour his office. If called upon for his opinion as to any defect, his censures are discreet ; if not called upon he is silent. But if his censures, when just, are temperate, his commendations when merited are cordial. Above all he holds the practice to be equally dishonest, disingenuous, and vulgar, which makes communities and bodies answerable for the faults and errors of individuals, while he never com-

mends, or vindicates, any thing decidedly wrong, either in individuals or in communities.

I have thus, my dear Brethren, at the opening of our Ecclesiastical year, put together the general principles, upon which I have endeavoured to act during the extended period in which I have been entrusted with the weighty charge of your instruction in the faith as it is in Christ Jesus; and, though the major part of this discourse was but lately addressed to you, I am fully convinced that my powers of utterance were then, from serious illness, so indistinct, that many of you who were present, could not have heard what I said. I have therefore been induced to repeat it now, from a wish that the whole discourse should be at once brought before you. I will now conclude, with an earnest prayer to God, on your and on my behalf, that he may so prevent us, in all our doings with his most gracious favour, and so further us with his continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in Him, we may glorify His Holy name, and finally, through His mercy, obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE END.

MINISTERIAL FIDELITY AND JOY IN DEATH.

# A SERMON

PREACHED

IN PITT-STREET CHAPEL,

LIVERPOOL,

ON MONDAY EVENING, JUNE 13, 1836,

ON OCCASION OF

THE DEATH

OF THE

REV. DAVID M<sup>c</sup>NICOLL,

BY JAMES DIXON.

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# A SERMON.

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ACTS XX. 24.

“BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS MOVE ME, NEITHER COUNT I MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT I MIGHT FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY, WHICH I HAVE RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD.”

ALTHOUGH St. Paul was an apostle, an inspired man, an exalted saint, and had been pre-eminently useful in extending the triumphs of the gospel, he evidently looked forward to the completion of his career with deep feeling and interest. To the dispensation which terminates their probation, and fixes their state unalterably, the wise and the good must often advert. The physical and relative consequences of death—the disorganization of the body—the withdrawal of the senses from the visible creation—the termination of all connection with business and pleasure—the rending of the natural endearments and ties which unite us to each other, are not the circumstances which give to this event its highest importance, but “*that which shall be hereafter.*”

The immortal and lofty nature of man attaches him to another sphere of being ; and, because it is eternal, he



must reflect upon it with great solemnity, and turn to it as the perfection of suffering or joy. Eternity throws an infinitude of grandeur on the nature destined to its existence, whilst it gives an incalculable impetus to all the sensations, either of misery or happiness, which are to remain in increasing consciousness during its whole period. Taken in a separate and isolated point of view, death is important ; but considered with respect both to the past and the future, it is greatly heightened.

The decree which closes our account with the world, our state of probation, our opportunities of acquiring religion, our period of training in the school of Christ, our means of application to the atoning blood and throne of grace, the sources of spiritual influence, by which piety, purity, and love may be admitted into the moral constitution, must be felt as involving high and momentous interests. But when viewed as an initiation into the grand realities of the eternal state ; an admission to the presence of God, or final separation from Him ; an introduction to the unfading bliss of Paradise, or never ending misery ; the commencement of " eternal life," or the beginning of " eternal death ;" in a word, the possession of the fullness of joy, and pleasures which flow for evermore, or the endurance of " the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched ;" these are the considerations which give to death its most affecting and solemn import.

St. Paul sustained a double character ; that of a christian, and that of a minister of religion. In the language of the text, he adverts to both ; and expresses an anxious desire that he might, as a believer, "*finish his course with joy,*" and close the ministry itself which he had " received of the Lord Jesus Christ," in

a successful and triumphant manner. The termination of his career as an individual believer, was, no doubt, felt by him to be of the first importance : and his retention of the privileges of divine grace ; his steadfastness in the faith ; his perseverance in well doing ; his triumph over the world ; his attainment of the image of God, and the beauties of christian holiness, were the things on which he constantly fixed his attention, and to which he directed his energies. But being called to a great work, on a magnificent theatre, he felt a proportionate desire that he might be enabled to act his part nobly, and terminate his mission, after having delivered his last communication from his Lord to the church, in the midst of the glory of a triumphant departure. In his case, the wish was verified. From the moment he was met on his way to Damascus, saw the "light brighter than the sun," heard the gentle voice "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest," and received his appointment to "open the blind eyes, to turn the Gentiles from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance amongst the sanctified," till the moment he was "ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand," he never deviated from his course. The revelations he received were faithfully transmitted ; his apostolic mission fully executed ; the regions of the Gentile world widely and extensively traversed ; the most celebrated cities visited and blessed by his labours ; the basis of new and flourishing churches laid nearly to the whole extent of the Roman empire ; an order of edifying discipline established on the authority of his epistles ; and a numerous spiritual people raised to perpetuate and extend the leaven of holy doctrine and experimental religion. If "*labours more abundant,*" unexampled successes, miraculous spi-

ritual gifts, and moreover, the crown of martyrdom in prospect, could afford a happy end, then this favour was granted to this great apostle, and he finished his course and his ministry with joy.

The same twofold character belongs to every true minister of the word of God. The responsibility of religion and of official trust lie equally upon him. Like other men, he is bound to live by faith in the Son of God; to yield his heart to the power of divine grace, and the influence of religious principle; to cultivate the fruits of the Holy Spirit; and diligently to attend to the practical duties of the christian life. But, in addition to this, as he has been placed in the ministry by the call of God, he is under obligation to hold fast his vocation, to retain his *ministerial grace*, and diligently to prosecute the objects of his mission, in order to finish his course with joy. Indeed the two parts of his character are inseparably interwoven. He cannot keep the religious life fresh and vigorous, but it must sustain, guide, sanctify, and render his ministry effective; nor can he discharge his public duties faithfully, without a constant intercourse with the fountain of sacred influence; and this again must have a powerful re-action on the state of the heart. Ministerial fidelity then always presupposes and includes religious. The movements of the soul in a line of spiritual obedience and official duty, though different in nature, cannot go on independently of each other; they must be contemporaneous; and, as the rills which descend from the mountains meet in a common channel, so, all the feelings belonging to the spiritual life, and the duties of the ministerial office, must unite in one stream of piety, and, deepening as it flows, end in calm, tranquil, and triumphant joy.

As it has pleased God, in his inscrutable wisdom, to remove from amongst us an eminent minister, as well as a beloved christian friend, it may be profitable to consider his death as connected with the pastoral relation. Providence evidently intends us to derive lessons of instruction and improvement from events as they arise in his mysterious economy ; and it would defeat the purpose to limit our attention to only one point. The common and ordinary employments of life, as well as the sad and afflictive circumstances of death, are generally uniform ; but when we find a person elevated to some public station, we naturally wish to know how he acquitted himself in the peculiar position he held. In retracing the life of a minister of state, though we may desire to be acquainted with his private character, yet his wisdom or folly ; his honour or baseness ; his fidelity or betrayal of his trust ; his patriotic devotedness, or perfidy to his country's weal, would fix the most attention ; and the qualities displayed in his public character, are those which must crown his memory with glory, or associate it with infamy and disgrace. So in reviewing the course of a minister of Jesus Christ, it is essential to regard him, chiefly, in his official character. Examples of humble piety, in connection with fidelity to the Saviour, to the truth, to the permanent interests of the church, to the souls of men, together with the display of eminent gifts, must be esteemed of great value. These considerations must be associated with the joyous death of the faithful minister. He is called not only to surrender his soul to God, and exercise a class of pious feelings suited to the solemn occasion of death, but to give up his stewardship, and terminate his ministerial course.

I. Then the triumphant death of the minister implies

the retention of the grace, and the faithful discharge of the duties of his calling.

As the final acceptance of the saints, supposes faith in Christ retained as the title, and a wise, holy, and useful life as the evidence of its genuineness, so the commission borne by the christian minister being a "*dispensation of the gospel*" itself, the happy termination of his course is consequently on fidelity to the trust.

This consideration gives great dignity and weight to the functions and character of the minister. He may, or may not be a man of elevated rank, wealth, influence, and standing in society; but it is not by these accidents of existence that he is to be judged, but by the commission he bears. There is, indeed, an important point of difference between the inspired apostles and the ordinary preachers of the gospel; to the extraordinary and inspired apostle, the dispensation was given as a message and revelation received directly from God, whilst the ordinary and uninspired teacher is only employed to dispense. With this difference, an important one it is granted, as regards the manner of acquiring the knowledge of the truth, and the mode of inauguration, the *subject* of the deposit is the same. The apostles and evangelists were taught the great truths of christianity by a plenary inspiration; had the duty of making the hidden truths of the kingdom of God known to the world imposed upon them imperatively by the Lord; authority given to lay the foundations of the Church, and minister the entire economy and dispensation of the gospel, by a direct commission. The ordinary pastor does not receive the knowledge of the gospel in vision, mental extacy, or by a mysterious perspective, in which the great facts, doctrines, pre-

cepts, and blessings of religion are pourtrayed, as in the sheet let down from heaven to instruct St. Peter in his duty, no longer to consider "any man common or unclean." But although the revelation is not made to him in the first instance, the *matter* of the truth already revealed and established is that which is committed to his charge. If not, what is? He possesses no right to originate any doctrine, propound independently any class of duties, or assume the legislative power in the establishment of ordinances; consequently his office is purely ministerial; and of what is he minister, but the gospel?

On this principle, his doctrine must not only flow in perfect harmony and concord with the truths generally taught in the Holy Scriptures; but, subordinately, he is invested with power to dispense the great and inestimable blessings of which the doctrine is the type. He is not only called to discourse on the divine counsels respecting the repentance, pardon, and regeneration of men, but as "a worker together with God," to call the wicked to repentance, offer pardon to the guilty, and by preaching the "truth of the gospel," in connection with a belief of which, the regenerating spirit is never withheld, instrumentally to produce that great work. It is not simply by declamation, exposition, and description, that he is to exhibit the provisions of the covenant of grace, but he must also found on this, the free and unlimited offer of all its blessings to those who choose by faith to embrace them. His office is not merely to take his stand beneath the shadow of the cross, and expatiate on its mystery, its mercy, its merit, its tragic sufferings, but to lead the lost to "*Behold the Lamb of God,*" that believing they may obtain life through his name. And because "faith cometh by hearing,

and hearing by the Word of God ;” and justification, adoption, purity, victory over the world, and an intimate intercourse with God, are suspended on faith, so in a subordinate sense, he may be said to administer this salvation, when he proclaims that word which is the instrumental cause leading to this state of grace.

There is a difference betwixt mere teaching and the “*kingdom of God in power*.” It is impossible to account for the effects produced by the gospel, in the period of its primitive glory, on the principle that the apostles and evangelists merely enunciated the truth. They uniformly affirmed that the gospel they preached was “in power, and the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance,” and that consequently there flowed in the channel of their ministry, and the institutions of the church they established, a divine influence which gave vitality to the truth, and communicated saving grace to the hearts of the people. As the ministry is of divine appointment, an integral part of the christian economy, and evidently intended to be contemporaneous, it cannot be imagined that God will, at any time, or under any circumstances, withdraw from it the grace and power of his Spirit.

The fruits which, in modern times, attend the labours of every truly commissioned servant of Christ bear testimony to this truth. Can merely human teaching give eyesight to the blind, rouse the slumbering conscience, soften the obdurate heart, raise the dead in sin to life, justify the guilty, and pour the stream of undecaying consolation into the troubled spirit? If reason and oratory cannot accomplish these great results, and they are found to exist in the train of an evangelical ministry, then it follows that it is an ordinance of God, and the channel of his grace. The angel who bore the tidings

of the Saviour's birth, might be hailed by the shepherds to the abodes of earth on account of his angelic powers; but the beauty of his form, the rapidity of his flight, the music of his voice, and the ineffable glory of his appearance, sink into insignificance compared with the importance of his message—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." So, the feet of the messenger of peace may be "*beautiful on the mountains*;" but the glad tidings he carries, the Saviour he offers, the privileges he bears in his commission, and the grace of God which flows to the world through the medium of the office he holds, is of transcendentally greater moment than any other view of the subject.

To these sentiments respecting a Divine designation to the ministry, agree the descriptions of its most onerous and responsible duties. The terms call, anoint, elect, send, put in trust, commit, and ordain, are the ordinary expressions of Scripture to represent the nature of their office. This selection of persons on the part of the great Head of the Church, may be considered an act of grace, not merely on account of the choice made, but also from the peculiar gifts of the Spirit bestowed. Hence the apostle attributes his own call to this: "To me who am less than the least of all saints is *this grace* given, that I should preach amongst the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." As this ordination and appointment always implies an anointing of the Holy Spirit, grafted upon, and superadded to the grace of personal piety; so, it follows, that this gift "*must be stirred up*" and kept alive by suitable exercises. And because the fruits of grace in the regenerate heart can only retain their freshness and beauty by the constant flow of spiritual influence



and an avoidance of every external evil which would blight and wither them; so, on the same principle, this other grace can only be continued by the Saviour who gave it, and that on the ground of its diligent improvement and indefatigable application. These gifts of the ministry, are imparted in relation to the subjects, interests, and designs of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. There is as close an affinity and obvious a design between the experimental part of the work of Christ, and the objects proposed to be accomplished in the world, as there is between the human senses, and the field of their developement. And as the mental faculties and the senses of the body, however perfect, must be employed by a constant, diligent, and discriminating application to their legitimate objects and uses, in order to enrich the mind and fit us for the practical business, or mental pleasures of life; so spiritual gifts must be diligently cultivated, or they will decay or be withdrawn; and being created for a specific purpose, must be exercised in their own sphere.


If a gift of "KNOWLEDGE" has been communicated in relation to sacred subjects, it must be improved. The Holy Scriptures, the doctrines of religion, the nature of the work of grace, the states of men, and the interests of the kingdom of Christ must be the themes of constant thought and meditation. The spiritual man may, indeed, "intermeddle with all knowledge," as subsidiary and auxiliary to divine, but if he would retain the grace of his calling in full and efficient ardour, he must be an incessant student of divine truth, and constantly expatiating in its beautiful and illimitable fields, gather its fruits, and enrich his mind with its treasures. If the spirit of the prophets,—meaning by

this, preaching,—has descended upon him, then it is essential that he should exercise it legitimately, in order to retain it. Is he sent to announce the law, to preach the gospel, to win souls to Christ? This must be the burden of his message, whilst his spirit partakes the solemn and infinitely important subjects he delivers.

Has “FAITH” been imparted in relation to the counsels and designs of God in his own kingdom and work? This is mentioned by the apostle amongst the peculiar “gifts of the Spirit,” belonging pre-eminently to those who are called to carry out the grand design. Few, it is to be feared, from the apostolic ages down to the times of the last great revival of religion, attained to an adequate perception of, and confidence in, the designs of God. The gospel has rather been considered as the basis of a theory, or of a creed, and the means of personal salvation, than the weighty and all-efficient instrument of the renovation of the world. The minister who takes up the christian scheme as the mere dogmas of a sect, or the instrument of a limited operation, has not been inducted into the true knowledge of the evangelical system; his mind has not taken its mould, his exertions do not move on its dimensions, and he has mistaken the emotions of personal or merely relative piety, for that faith, which, comprehending the whole scheme and design of God in the establishment of his kingdom, and the gift of his Son, puts itself, in conjunction with the whole church, to carry forward the sublime and benevolent plan. This faith must be brought into exercise by every preacher, or his message will fail in its effect. The proof that the gospel is intended to fill the world with the light and glory of God, is no evidence of a local and

limited inefficiency. The design of the Creator to give a cheering light, a sensible vigour, and a beautiful fertility to the whole of nature by the agency of the sun, is no proof that the same blessings are not conferred on the separate portions of the earth which compose the whole. The humble minister is in possession of a mighty instrumentality, and if he knew his strength, or rather, if knowing his own weakness, he took hold of the faithful word, and by teaching, prayer, trust in the Spirit's influence, and reliance on the presence and power of his divine Lord, brought it to bear experimentally and fully on his specific charge, and by united counsels and exertions, on the whole world, the effect would be proportionately glorious.

The apostle remarks, "the LOVE of Christ constraineth us ;" and after directing those who are employed in the work of the Lord to "covet earnestly the best gifts," says, "Yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Certainly if one grace is more appropriate to the ministry, and necessary to be cultivated than another, it is love. It would, indeed, be a strange anomaly for a person to bear a message of infinite and tender mercy from God without having the feeling of mercy and compassion deeply implanted in his own heart ; to expatiate on a love, free, tender, universal, and illimitable, and not possess the sentiment of love glowing and burning in his own bosom ; to be sent to comfort the mourner, to soothe the sorrowful, to strengthen the weak, and to succour the distressed, without any touching sympathy in his own soul. Love is the most essential and appropriate feeling for employment, because it is the very element of the



gospel itself. Whilst the scheme of religion brought to view by the revelations of Scripture, partakes of all the sublimities of wisdom, purity, and justice, it is pre-eminently a dispensation of mercy and love. The Deity is designated the "God of love," and speaks to us in the tenderness of a father. From the impulse of the same perfection our redemption originated, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Our salvation flows from the same source—"By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Every promise, every precept, every privilege, every appointed ordinance of religion, speaks the language, or inspires the sentiment of love. How incongruous to his employment for the Christian minister to conduct the worship of God, deliver his message, or hold intercourse with his flock, in any other spirit than that of love! Not intelligence only, intellectual strength, or forms of light and glory, fit the angels to worship before the throne, or to be sent forth to "minister to those who are heirs of salvation," but intense, ardent, and devoted love. So no feeling but this can suit the employment of the sanctuary, either in relation to God or man. If the truth, the law, and the ordinances of the gospel, are administered by the servant as by the master, the spirit of the whole will be love. With God, the evolutions of providence, and even the executions of judgment, as well as the scheme of redemption, move on an infinite principle of goodness or mercy: and as far as human instrumentality is expressly and directly employed, it must imitate this benevolence, and operate in harmony with these evident principles of the divine economy. Some will

refuse to yield to the truth though spoken in love, but without it, however powerful in argument, lucid in statement, and discursive, varied, and eloquent, no such effects can be expected, or will take place.

The duties of the calling agree to this representation —Are they “WATCHMEN” in Zion? The term implies obligation to be found at the post of observation and duty; to guard the interests of the church, to give a true notice of the state of things, and, in case of need, to sound an intelligible alarm. The dangers to which the interests of religion are liable, the enemies which lie in the path of the pious, and the evil agencies constantly at work to blight and injure the cause of God, make it requisite that vigilant and constant heed be paid. The passenger who sails across the ocean may repose calmly, and, free from anxiety, take his rest; but there is one mind constantly awake. He who has the charge of the vessel, paces the deck, watches the rising storm in the distant heavens, consults his charts, and makes his reckonings; guards against hidden rocks and dangerous shores, that, escaping the perils of the voyage, he may conduct his valuable cargo in safety to the destined port. In like manner, the private christian who has only his personal salvation to attend to, may repose beneath the cross, in the enjoyment of the peace of God, and the happy consolations of true religion, undisturbed respecting the general interests of the church. But he who is entrusted with these interests, is bound to exercise an ever wakeful attention. The “*care of all the churches*,” to which St. Paul adverts with so much feeling, appears to have been the most oppressive and onerous duty of his calling, as it must be to every true minister of the gospel.


Are they “SHEPHERDS” and “PASTORS” of the flock?

The description supposes an obligation to tend, to go before, and to lead them into green and fruitful pastures. By rich and wholesome doctrine ; by a clear and full exhibition of christian privileges ; by simple and spiritual ordinances administered so as to secure the gracious influences of the Spirit of God ; as well as by the fences of a scriptural discipline ; it belongs to them to guard and feed the flock of Christ. All this, it is true, is subordinate to the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls. His province is to create, and prepare, as well as to exercise a primary superintendence. As in nature, providence has founded the earth, enriched it with its beautiful and varied fruits ; caused the river to water, and the dew and rains to fertilize, as well as framed all those influences by which the whole is fitted and ripened for the use of all living creatures ; so He who is "*God with us*," has founded the church, provided its sacrifice, given its blessed truths, procured the gift of the Holy Spirit, and established its economy and ordinances. But in both cases a secondary agency is employed. The earth yields its fruits to the skill and industry of man, and a careful superintendence is essential to distribute equally the abundance. So to make a spiritual provision for the souls of men, belongs to the "*good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep*;" but to arrange, exhibit, and lead to the knowledge and enjoyment of these blessings, belongs, subordinately, to the ministers of the gospel.

Are they "AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST?" The employment supposes the duty of negotiating a reconciliation betwixt men and God on the terms of their commission. In asserting the claims of Deity ; the honours and glories of redemption ; the paramount authority of the divine law ; propounding the principles and doc-

trines of the gospel ; and calling sinners to repentance, they are not at liberty to legislate ; their only office is to minister. The conditions on which God proposes to pardon and save, are not to be altered, but plainly and fully made known, and, at the same time, urged with the utmost importunity and affection. The ground and medium of reconciliation being Christ—"for God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing their trespasses unto them"—it follows, that the great and primary condition of this state, in all ages, and amongst all classes of men, is faith in his name. This principle, of itself, is sufficient to distinguish between the faithful ambassador, and the one who is not divinely appointed. He who has not been sent by the great Head of the Church, is certain to build on another foundation. Not apprehending the harmony betwixt "*the blood of the cross*," and trust in its merits, he devises some other plan of salvation, whilst he who is called by Christ, is careful to proclaim him as "*the end of the law for righteousness*," and that he who believeth "*shall be saved*."

Are they "EVANGELISTS?" The office supposes the obligation to proclaim the message of truth and love to the world. To call sinners to repentance, as well as to take care of those already saved. It is the evident design of Jesus Christ, who, "*by the grace of God, tasted death for every man*," that the doctrines of the cross should be carried out to the extent of the design. "Go ye," he said to the apostles, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The duty of accomplishing this original purpose must rest somewhere. And although it is not in the power of one individual to carry out his



labours to the extent of the command, yet if its spirit were universally felt, that which is impracticable to the individual, would be possible to the many ; and by wise counsels, mutual support, and harmonious co-operation, the design would be accomplished. Indeed, the language was not addressed originally to one of the disciples only, but to the whole number ; and by a division of glorious labour, the command was so far fulfilled, as in one generation, to lead to the most amazing results. Every minister must be an evangelist in spirit ; and, uniting his exertions with those of others, must use his utmost efforts to extend the light of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Are they "STARS" in the right hand of Christ ? The appellation supposes them to shine brightly in the darkness of the night. They may not be of equal magnitude or brilliance, any more than the planets which adorn and illuminate the heavens ; but, like them, they are destined to move in their own proper orbit, and give a certain light to those who are enquiring their way to Zion. As the wise men of the east were conducted by the mysterious star to the cradle of the new born Saviour ; where they presented their incense, offered their devotions, and plighted their faith ; so these "*lights of the world*," ought to conduct men to Him ; and, by their spirit, example, and doctrine, throw a general illumination on the darkness of the world.

Are they "ANGELS" of the churches ? This name supposes that they imitate those exalted natures in wisdom, purity, and benevolence. We know but little of angels, except that there is joy in their presence when one sinner repenteth ; that they are ministering spirits sent to minister to the heirs of salvation ; that when *Lazarus* died, they bore his departing spirit into Abra-



ham's bosom ; and that they form a part of the great family of heaven. Why borrow a term from these great intelligencies so near the throne of God, so highly exalted in their employments and nature, and manifesting, so far as their intercourse with earth is recorded, dispositions so holy and good, except to convey an impression of the heavenly spirit, habits, and manners to be cherished and exhibited by those who bear their name ? When contemplating this character, and these duties, the apostle exclaims, "*Who is sufficient for these things.*" The response must be that of every age, and every one so employed—" *Our sufficiency is of God.*"

The objects of the christian ministry are specific in their nature. Being a part of the great apparatus of means provided by the author of christianity for the express purpose of executing the design of its establishment, it must, if no intervening obstacle prevent, on the part of the preacher or his hearers, "*accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent.*" It is admitted, indeed, that this appointed instrumentality is not the highest and the first in the economy of our salvation. There is no kind of comparison between the sacrifice of the cross, the Mediator's throne, the effusions of Pentecost, the inspiration of the Scriptures, or the position held by prophets and apostles in the scheme of our salvation, and the functions of the ministry. But as language is necessary to the transmission of thought, the discoveries of genius, and the lessons of wisdom, though in itself infinitely inferior to them ; so in the present constitution of man, it is a wise ordination of God, to convey the intelligence of the grace, the facts, and the blessings of redemption to the world, by the christian ministry. This forms a part of the benign bringing men into a state of grace, in conse-

quence of its adaptation to the primary condition of that state, namely, faith. Had it entered into the design of Deity to transfuse the peace and purity of religion into the moral constitution by an unconditional and irresistible operation, then, this might have been done without either a written revelation, or an oral ministry. But faith in the gospel testimony, being the leading principle and condition of an interest in its privileges ; the establishment of preaching for the purpose of testifying, unfolding, and distinctly exhibiting its objects, is obviously a part of the same merciful appointment. To make credit in testimony, belief in the truth, and trust in the Saviour, the great turning points of salvation ; without, at the same time, causing this testimony to be unequivocally borne, this truth to be made known, and this Saviour to be set forth in the attractive glory of his character ; as it would in fact render the design incomplete, so it would ill agree to either the wisdom or the benevolence of God, as displayed in all other instances of his government.

The case put by the apostle will be the best elucidation of the reason of his own inspired practice in preaching Christ crucified. “ *How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard, and how can they hear without a preacher, and how can he preach except he be sent ?*” Hence it was the great business of his ministry to make the Saviour known. “ *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” “ *We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*”—“ *I was determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*” The preference given to this topic, is evidently founded in the principle,

that faith in his name, is the condition of salvation. A minister who leaves out Christ, or gives him any other than the most prominent place, to make way for even the most learned, curious, or sublime speculations, would be much more reprehensible and absurd, than the physician, who, on visiting a patient under the influence of a mortal malady, should lay aside the rules of his science, and the application of his remedies, to read him lectures on some topic of common interest. If the gospel be true, "no other name is given among men whereby they can be saved but that of Christ," consequently, to withhold the knowledge of this name, is criminally to leave the souls of men under the condemnation of guilt, in the bondage and misery of sin, and exposed to all the horrors of "*eternal death.*"

Then, the one great object of the ministry, is to bring sinners to Christ. It may be heard in thunder, uttering the warnings and terrors of the law; exposing the disease of sin, and shewing its deformity; pointing out the fearful consequences of transgression, and portraying the Almighty in terrible majesty and burning anger; yet, even in this respect, "*the law is a school-master to bring us to Christ.*" It may take up the note of invitation, and, in tender and impassioned strains, call upon the guilty to believe; open the treasures of divine grace to their acceptance; place before them the blessings of the spiritual state; the glory and dignity of man in communion with God, bearing the impress of his image, and anticipating the joys of immortality; but the design is the same—the attraction of the sinner to the Saviour. It may take up a lofty logic and reason on the evidences of the christian revelation; the harmonies of the truth; the separate doctrines of the holy Scriptures; the personal glories of the Son of God;

the proofs of an immortal nature in man ; the immutable principles, and perfect fitness of the morality of the gospel ; as well as on the being and attributes of God ; but the end is to disarm infidelity of its excuses, drive it from its lurking places, and bring its unhappy victims to an adherence to the christian faith. It may descend to a minute detail and analysis of the feelings and emotions of religious experience ; the awakenings of the conscience ; the fears and terrors of the broken and contrite spirit ; the timid and embarrassed attempts of a first essay to pray and seek God ; the difficulties and impediments of the spiritual life ; as well as the signs and evidences of its existence in the heart ; but the object is still to assist the enquirer to come to Christ, to strengthen the believer to remain in him, and to afford an encouraging sympathy to the tempted and distressed. It may soar to the lofty and sublime ; descant on the glories of the kingdom of Messiah ; the universal purity and bliss of the millennial period ; the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven ; the awakened life and joys of the resurrection morning ; the consummation of all earthly interests by the final sentence of the judge ; together with those endless and eternally heightening grandeurs, which open up to the views and feelings of man in his immortalized state ; the end, however, is still to bring men from the pursuit of low and sordid enjoyments, to seek those which belong to religion and eternity.

With what intensity St. Paul fixed his attention on the practical objects of the christian ministry, his life and labours ; his sufferings and anticipations, unite to attest. He could not consider his course of ministerial toil finished at all, and certainly, to himself,

it would not close in joy, unless he had the fullest reason to conclude that he had been the honoured instrument of bringing many sons to glory. *“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing ;” “Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. For ye are our glory and joy.”* His “conduct shews most fully, that he did not view his apostolic call, his commission to the Gentiles, his possession of inspiration, his abundant spiritual gifts, in any other light, than as furnishing him with the means of bringing sinners to Christ, building up the church, and preparing immortal souls for the heaven of purity and love. To occupy a barren office ; surrounded by no believing, converted, happy, and obedient men, ready to be presented to the approaching tribunal of the Saviour, would, in his judgment, be like the sun shining over universal sterility, instead of being cheered in his course by the fertility and beauty occasioned by his warmth. In his case, neither inspiration, preaching, toils, perils, persecution, imprisonment, nor the highest ministerial eloquence and endowments, terminated in themselves, but were conferred for the valuable and glorious purpose of imparting the blessings of religious truth and grace to man ; and these again were designed to lead him to salvation and to heaven. Those are *“wise who win souls,”* and *“they that have turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”*

Then from these considerations, it will appear, that the joyous death of the minister of Christ, supposes the accomplishment of that great work which he was commissioned to perform. It is not meant that this constitutes the title of his rights, or even the ground of his happiness, considered as a christian. On the

other hand, his interest in the atonement of his Lord, and his possession of the grace of his Spirit, will form the basis of his privileges, and the fountain of his enjoyment. But as a minister, in connection with this, though he may have occasion for deep humiliation, shame, and confession of sin, yet he must have maintained the truth, adhered to the church in all its fortunes, faithfully preached the gospel he had received, and witnessed the blessing of God, more or less, on his labours, or he can have no occasion of joy, that he is finishing his course.

From the notice taken of the subject in the sacred Scriptures, we have reason to conclude that the future judgment in the case of those who have had any charge in the church, will not merely proceed on the rule of experience, knowledge, character, and pious obedience, as believers, but on the fulfilment of the stewardship entrusted to them by "*the Lord of the harvest.*" The *principle* of this proposition is seen in its supreme and highest illustration, in the case of the Son of God. His exaltation as man and mediator, is invariably represented as the reward of his perfected work. "For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." When though "rich for our sakes he had become poor;" had fully taught his own doctrines; instituted the rites of his church; established his kingdom amongst men; put the seal of certainty on his mission, by his stupendous, but merciful miracles; fulfilled all righteousness, in magnifying the law in the sight of the intelligent universe; taken up all the councils and arrangements of the divine predestination respecting the world's redemption; and in his birth, life, works, and sufferings, traversed

the line of prophetic truth, and accomplished the whole:—had by the cross propitiated God, redeemed the world, wrought out an infinite merit, and laid the basis of his grand priestly character in his sacrifice; in fine, had subdued and conquered death and the grave by his resurrection, as the first fruits of those who sleep:—then, he ascended in triumph to the mediatorial throne, had the sceptre of all power placed in his hand, and the dominion of all worlds laid at his feet. “Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

Here we have the doctrine of official fidelity illustrated in the highest degree, both in its accomplishment and its rewards. Strictly and properly, our Lord could claim the glory of his throne, on the ground of having fully accomplished that which related to the position he holds. His work finished on earth, and in our human nature, is the grand, meritorious centre, from whence emanates and evolves, through all nature and all duration, the bright and eternally heightening glories of salvation. His reward, consequently, flows from his own work, whilst that which is bestowed upon man is economical; but still, admitting, as it does, of degrees, and of dealing with him, on the footing of an evangelical justice, it is a part of the economy of heaven to treat all men, entrusted with various talents, on the ground of their improvement or neglect of the deposit. Hence Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, will not be finally judged on the principle of that simple piety which belonged to him in his private capacity. Superadded to this, will

be the responsible trust reposed in him in his commission to Pharoah ; his conduct as the leader of Israel ; his faithfulness to his charge as an instructor and prophet ; his rectitude as a judge ; and, especially, his conduct in giving a true and perfect transcript of that law, which, though written by the finger of God, was transmitted through his hands to the people. And to give proof of the truth of this sentiment, as well as to impress all ages with the importance of fidelity to a trust so sacred, we even find, that, in consequence of not having retained his official integrity at the waters of Meribah, this great man was not permitted to enter the land of promise. He was commanded to ascend to Pisgah, to survey the scenery on which his mind had been so long intent, and then to surrender up his spirit to God, without being allowed to cross Jordan, and share in the joys of so triumphant an event. David, and the kings, will be held amenable also, on the footing of their public character. We have some notice of this in their treatment by providence. Saul forfeited his throne altogether by infidelity to his trust ; and David, himself, having sinned in his regal character, was visited by incessant trouble ; so that although he had set his heart on building the temple of the Lord, and had long and liberally provided for that pious work, yet he was not allowed to do it. Like Moses, he beheld the object on which his affections were placed, in the distance, but it was reserved for his son to accomplish the work, and enjoy the honour. The prophets, too, will be dealt with on the rule of their prophetic fidelity. Balaam, though impelled to deliver the message of Jehovah to Balak, proved unfaithful in his subsequent conduct, and was destroyed. Jeremiah, in the midst of tears and mourning, proclaimed the truth entrusted to him, though at the hazard of incurring the



highest displeasure of king and people ; and when Jerusalem was overthrown, the nation broken up, the people led captive, and ruin and desolation brought upon them, this righteous man was preserved.

These cases, are hints and notices of the principle on which God will finally adjudicate in the case of those who are commissioned to announce his Word. We find the apostle adverting to this, in the most solemn and pathetic manner, in his addresses to Timothy, and in his own personal anticipations—"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession ; that thou keep this commandment, without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ; which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."—"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which some professing, have erred concerning the faith :” and, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing.”

Then it is obvious, from these considerations, as well as the more general representations of the distributive justice of God, that the final award in case of ministers, will turn on the question of fidelity to their trust, as well as on their personal faith and piety :—Whether the God of their sermons has been the God of the Bible ;—in his sovereign rights, his rectoral glories, his immaculate holiness, his infinite love, his rich, free, and universal

grace :—or their attempt has been to minify the Almighty to the dimensions of some theoretic scheme of philosophic theology :—Whether the Saviour of their ministry has been the Saviour of the christian dispensation—the eternal son of the Father—Emanuel—God with us—the true and infinite atonement—the High Priest of our profession—the King in our Zion :—or whether some diminutive and ideal being, created by human ingenuity, and stripped of divine honours and glories, adorned in a flowing robe of human ornament, has been elevated to his throne :—Whether man has been exhibited as the truth of God represents him ; intelligent, capable of religion, and endowed with the gift of immortality ; but devoid of the image of God, of all innate righteousness, fallen, depraved, prone to every evil, guilty, condemned, and justly exposed to the miseries of eternal death ; or exalted as a demigod ; arrayed in the noblest qualities ; represented as innocent and virtuous, and made the idol of a false and flattering homage :—Whether the doctrines and privileges of the covenant of grace ; the pardon of sin ; the adopting love of God ; the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit ; the beauties and obligations of christian holiness ; together with the encouragement and hopes of a joyful eternity, have been the themes of their ministry :—or whether curious speculations, human science, tinselled eloquence, a mawkish sentimentality, and a studious desire to pander to human vanity and passion, have taken their place :—Whether the house of God has, by a perspicuous enunciation of truth, been made a temple of light ; by the faithful distribution of the provisions of the gospel, presented a feast of “ fat things, of wines, on the lees well refined ;” secured, through prayer and

faith, that divine influence which has been as a river, deep, wide, and living:—or, on the other hand, a murky darkness has overshadowed the sun of righteousness, a meagre barrenness attended the means of grace, and instead of refreshing rain, and flowing streams of heavenly love and power, the *ordinances* have been, like channels of water, dried up by the drought of summer.

As a successful exhibition of the truth can only be secured by the cultivation of its own *spirit*, this also must come in review before God. Have their own hearts been imbued with the love, mercy, tenderness, and purity of the gospel they have taught; and, from the feelings of a sanctified and enriched intellect, have they stood, on the one hand, before God to minister in his temple, bow at his throne, dispense his truth, and lead his worship; and, on the other, before the people, to sympathise with their state, weep over their dangers, seek their reconciliation, and become their priest in fervent supplication:—or have they performed the work of religion, and served at the altar, in a dissipated, careless, and worldly spirit?—Have they studiously cultivated the state they have inculcated; and preaching the doctrine of justification, have they sought to be justified? Whilst insisting on the necessity of christian holiness as an essential qualification for heaven, have they sedulously cultivated its spirit? And stimulating the people to perseverance and duty, by the fervour of exhortation and cautionary counsel, have they, at the same time, outstript them in the rapidity of their own progress in the divine life, and taken especial care that their own habits should flow in the channel marked out for others?

To close this work faithfully in the midst of the tri-

umphs of the truth, and the approval of God, is, in the sense of the text, "to finish it with joy." But how can it inspire joy? Is there any thing in laying down the commission, finishing the prophetic message, delivering the last testimony, and dying in the favour of God, and in the certain prospect of an approving sentence, to produce sensations of pleasure? Yes, there must be happiness in the will and decisions of God, be they what they may, in relation to the good and faithful steward. He rejoices when he is saved; he rejoices when, "*counted faithful, being put into the ministry;*" he rejoices, when it pleases God to make him useful in winning souls; he rejoices, when he beholds the triumphs of the truth; he rejoices, when he receives the summons to quit the stage of his conflicts and his glory; and he rejoices to go to heaven to "*receive the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.*"

Relief from the studies of the ministry, when connected with an anticipated, intuitive perception of the truth in the light of eternity, may be felt as a source of joy. It is true that these occupations are, in their own nature, the most noble and sublime which can occupy human thought. It is impossible fully to enter into them, without attaining great purity, strength, expansion, and elevation of mind. The light of divine truth constantly shining on the soul; the great facts, doctrines, and duties of revelation, rendered familiar by reiterated attention; and the grand objects proposed by the christian dispensation constantly regarded, cannot fail by their reflex influence, to fill the heart with the purest sentiments, and expand and exalt the intellect to the full extent of its powers. But there is pain and difficulty in these highest and purest pursuits, if not to the soul

considered in her own abstract essence, yet, certainly, to man in his compound character. Only let the mind be put to grapple with the great questions of theological truth, and they are soon felt to be overwhelming in their magnitude, to powers so feeble. To trace out God in his glories; the Messiah in his work; the christian evidences in their proof; the doctrines of the gospel in their fullness and harmony; the religion of the heart in its privileges and blessings; the duties of piety and morality, together with the notice of a future state of being; and so to mould and fashion all this acquired knowledge, as to throw its light on the church and the world, for their edification and salvation, is a task which may well cause the mightiest powers to bend. Who, having made the effort, have not found themselves bewildered in the midst of the multitude of objects, confounded by their magnificent and dazzling glories, baffled in their profoundest speculations and most subtle reasonings, and been obliged to descend from these aerial excursions, to a more humble and simple dependance on the testimony of God.

But even here, we find a new occasion of exercise. The study of the entire Scriptures, as contra-distinguished from the common-place method of a selection of texts to support a theory, is found to require the greatest industry, and the highest qualities of intellect and research. It has pleased God so to construct the holy writings—and the fact is a proof of their divine inspiration—as to present an entire and perfect revelation of truth; and yet in such manner, as to demand incessant study and faith, to comprehend and embrace them. We perceive some analogy between the laws and provisions of nature, and the structure of the Bible, in this respect. An exquisite arrangement, beautiful

harmony, useful adaptation, exhaustless treasures, never-failing fertility; are provided by the benevolence of God in the physical world. But it is not the man who vacantly walks the road of life, and is satisfied by mere animal indulgencies, who perceives this. All is lost to him, except the gratification of his appetites. No, it is the man of reason, observation, and taste, who discovers the operation of laws founded in the most profound intelligence, sovereign power, and universal goodness; whilst the evidence of this, teaches him to trace all to an infinite mind, and becomes an occasion of trust, of love, and of praise to the Deity. So, it is not the cursory reader of the Scriptures who sees their true character. They are divine; contain a narrative of the providence and dealings of God; elucidate the phenomena of man, his sin and recovery; present a boundless field of prophetic vision, stretching through all time, and, directly or remotely, embracing all things; reveal the great mystery and mercy of human redemption by the incarnation and death of the son of God; and lay open before the world the certainty of a future life. The themes, the language, the forms of speech, the fulness, and yet the absence of what we consider order, unite to make the Bible the most extraordinary book in the universe. He who studies this divine record, not merely for personal edification, but as an expounder of its contents, must feel that he has engaged in a task, which the greatest industry, the highest aids, and a life devoted to the object, cannot fully reach.

But the ardent study of the truth is not the only onerous employment of the ministry. The same writings speak of the "*burden of the word of the Lord.*" An expression often employed in respect of the message borne by the prophets to offending people and nations,

from God. All the duties associated with the preaching of the gospel, must, when rightly apprehended, produce sensations of overwhelming anxiety. To deliver the Word of God, as a message from himself, in his own spirit, so as to secure his approval, and in agreement with the truth, cannot but excite the most serious reflections and sense of responsibility. To speak of the danger of the life of sin ; of the urgent necessity of repentance ; of the riches of grace, and the love of God ; to present the Saviour's merits in all their fulness ; and press on the attention of dying men the obligation of a thorough conversion ; when delivered in a spirit which rises to the magnitude, solemnity, and awful circumstances, of the occasion, must be oppressively exciting to the soul. To reflect that a series of endless consequences hang suspended on the message delivered—consequences which run on through all the ages of time, affect all the highest interest of the human race ; tend to form the moral features of the world, and, above all, connect themselves with the unending happiness or misery of the whole human race :—the transcendent importance of these subjects, must be felt as awfully impressive.

Besides this, St. Paul speaks of the “care of all the churches.” The spirit of this must be felt by every minister to the extent of his charge. Having directly to deal with the souls of men, he cannot but be aware of circumstances tending to cause great and painful solicitude. Some will never be saved. Be as faithful, importunate, plain, affectionate, and tender as he may, they will turn a deaf ear to his entreaties. They may feel the force of the truth, be convinced of their sins, see the necessity of a converted state, admire the doctrines of religion, and, for a season, be melted by the love of the Saviour, but the evil passions of their na-

ture, the snares of the world, and the heart of unbelief, will gain the mastery ; convictions will be shaken off, sin indulged, and endless ruin follow. Some will backslide from God. "Beginning in the spirit they will end in the flesh ;" "make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience ;" "turn again to the beggarly elements of the world," and after "tasting the good Word of God, and feeling the powers of the world to come, fall away, crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." "The backslider will be filled with his own ways, being twice dead, he will be plucked up by the roots ;" and many of those, who like the angels, "who kept not their first estate," have walked in the temple of God, dwelt in its light, and stood amongst the saints, will be thrust into outer darkness. Others are in a feeble and diseased state. Their experience consists of confidence and doubt, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, exertions and falls, and the opposing principles of good and evil. Because of the feebleness of their faith, and their partial apprehension of the grace of the Holy Spirit, religion, in their case, presents itself in the form of an incessant struggle, instead of a happy triumph ; as the element of piety and love infused into a cold and earthly nature, instead of existing in its own animated glow ; and as a curative process going on in the old man, rather than the life, health, vigour, and beauty of the new. Some are the children of sorrow. Peculiar afflictions attend them. They seem marked out, like Job, for a singular treatment of providence, as if, in their persons, the sufferings of humanity, and the excellencies of religion, were to receive their most powerful illustration together. They dwell on an isolated spot ; few approach them, enter into their feelings, understand their case, or perceive



that the hand of God is upon them. Others, again, are entangled with earthly cares and perplexities. A contest is constantly kept up between religious principle and worldly engagements. Their path to heaven leads through the labyrinths of business, toil, and the incessant interruptions of secular duty. The minister is called to sympathise in all these cases; and so far as he partakes the spirit of his vocation, and follows his divine Lord, he enters into the feelings, afflictions, and dangers of the people, and bears a share in all their sorrows.

Let these considerations be united, and it is easy to conceive, that to finish a life of ministerial labour, is to close a course of probation of the most difficult and responsible description. It is a release from exercises and duties, which, while they are of the most pleasing and exalted kind, burden the soul, excite the feelings, exhaust mental energy, and waste life itself. On the same principle that a private christian has cause of joy in the prospect of leaving the world of trouble, danger, and temptation, for the rest that remaineth for the people of God; the minister may rejoice in the expectation of quitting the church militant, where conquests can only be gained in the midst of the spoils of war; where attempts at usefulness are often frowned upon with contempt, and the promise of good incessantly blighted by the overshadowing and furious whirlwind of some gathering storm; whilst, in the heaven to which he is going, religion exists in perfect peace, unsullied purity, harmonious love—for ever.

II. From this it follows, that to finish his course, may be a cause of joy to the faithful pastor, because, though it dissolves his connection with a particular charge, it unites him to the universal and triumphant church.

The connection subsisting between the minister and those to whom he is sent, is of the most interesting kind ; unlike the mere social relations founded in taste or passion, the obligations of conventional justice, the rules of expediency and of reciprocal duties, it comprehends the higher feelings and interests of religion.

This connection rests on the articles of the christian faith. The position, indeed, in which the two parties stand, is somewhat different ; but their union with each other embraces a profession of the faith ; and, on its principles, they take their standing in the church. Their bond of fellowship is the truth ; and that truth, being divine and immutable, assigns to all who believe and embrace it, their respective place.

There exists, in christianity, a *common salvation*, rules, blessings, grace, and immunities, which, constituting the basis of the system, and forming the charter of the entire scheme of mercy to man, are, consequently, the equal right of all. Hence, the most valuable and important parts of religion, are those which belong alike to all true believers, whether they occupy a private or public station ; and are administered on the same condition, in the same manner, and with equal freeness and fulness to all. Any difference in which the truth may place one person as compared with another, is economical, and intended simply to advance the interests of the community. If it is the duty of the minister to proclaim the truth, and keep before the attention of the people all the cardinal objects of faith, in a vivid and clear light, it is equally incumbent on the people to embrace this truth, and carefully to attain the privilege. The obvious demand of the church on the pastor, is, that he shall carefully guard his doctrine against adulteration ; teach the will of God perfectly ;

exhibit the cross in all its glories ; show the way of salvation clearly and intelligibly ; unfold the treasures of grace ; and, by a distinct and explicit proclamation of these objects of christian faith, lead the people to the enjoyment of every promised blessing. All this the church has a right to expect ; and to keep back anything, whether from incompetency, indolence, low experience, or unfaithfulness, is a fraud practiced on the people of God.

But if God, and the obvious justice of the case, require that the one party be faithful to the truth, so it must be on the other side. Nothing is more certain, than that a happy and prosperous state of religion can exist only on this principle of mutual fidelity to the requirements of the Word of God. Let the people perceive that the pastor is concerned only to get through his duties with professional respectability ; or is anxious and ingenious to dilate and rarify the truth to the thinnest possible consistence ; or that he seeks his own glory, instead of keeping his Lord and Saviour before their attention ; or, that falling in with the fashionable studies and speculations of the age, as a matter of mental amusement, he entertains them with theories, instead of giving them the bread of life : and discontent and murmuring, unless they have lost the relish for sacred things, must follow. So, on the other hand, if instead of entering heartily into the spirit of the truth, and attaining its hallowing blessings, the flock are half-hearted, worldly-minded, devoted to fashion, and cold in their religious affections, then the preacher must hang down his hands in weakness ; and in bitter sorrow, cry, " O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

But in case the two parties are faithful to the truth of God, and make it their business to carry it out in their respective stations, then, the effect must be to produce a state of mutual confidence and love.

The union between a minister and the church, embraces all the duties and obligations of the christian life. It is fellowship founded on law. The only security for the peace, well-being, advancement, and happiness of communities of men, is in a strict adherence to the eternal rules of justice, truth, and benevolence. On the principle of law and order, in connection with the elevating power of knowledge, and the purifying effects of religion, it would, no doubt, be possible to advance the state of society to an indefinite degree of intelligence, morality, and happiness. So, in christian communities, if all were equally agreed to adhere honestly and fairly to the law of Christ, there could be no ground for dispute; and the Church must, in such circumstances, exist in a state of great purity, peace, and efficiency. The primary rules and precepts of christianity, are equally binding on all its disciples, irrespective of any rank they may hold either in the church or the world. The two first and great commandments contain the elements of all law:—" *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy mind, and all thy soul, and all thy strength;*" and " *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" These simple but comprehensive precepts, if acted upon, would secure piety towards God, in all its details, and justice and rectitude towards man.

The obligation of obedience resting on all parties in the church, must oblige the minister to enunciate all the practical duties of religion, and equally bind the people to regard them. The one can have no right to muti-

gate, or hold back any part of the evangelical law, nor the other, to withhold their obedience. In practice, as well as theory, the faith without the law of the gospel, rends asunder that which is essential to the completeness of the religious character. The grace of Christ brings us into peace and favour with God ; the precepts of Christ are necessary to teach us to walk with Him. So, a ministry which unfolds the mysteries of love, without any reference to precept, will present to the people a rich and savoury feast ; but that which embraces both, will add the beauties of practical holiness. This is another feature of the connection between pastor and people. Both parties agreeing that christian holiness is the ultimate purpose of the gospel, find in the sentiment, and, especially in its spirit, and fruits, a bond of delightful union. Can a Christian Church, devoted to the pursuit of piety and practical holiness, have occasion of discontent with a ministry which sets up its standard, propounds its rules, makes known the mode of attaining it, and, by every consideration, urges to its practice ? On the other hand, can a minister have cause for dissatisfaction, if his charge are intent on cultivating this spirit, fervent in prayer, diligent in the use of the means for its attainment, and, at the same time, exemplary in manifesting its power in their life and conversation ? Here is no ground for complaint on either side ; and such a state of things must establish the confidence of believers themselves, and bind all to the ministers of these truths and blessings, by an influence of love, next to that which pervades the harmony and the happiness of heaven.

When unobstructed, the finest and purest affections naturally grow out of these relations, and are heightened by the position in which the parties stand. It

would be perfectly monstrous for the pastor and the people to feel only toward each other that common charity, which, as men, they bear towards the species. In the order of nature and providence, it is designed that special attachments should arise out of particular relations. This is one of those beautiful, final causes, which so strikingly illustrate the designing goodness of God in the moral phenomena, as well as the physical arrangement of the creation. What is the security, that the children of a family will have their infant helplessness sedulously guarded, their wants supplied, their education attended to, and their welfare in life regarded, instead of being left a prey to certain destruction?—The affection of their parents. God has not left these interests to a casual charity, to conventional law, and the arrangements of general society; but has made certain provision for them in those inextinguishable feelings of love which glow in the bosom of parents. Other affections appear to be designed to answer valuable purposes, and often finely manifest their strength. The love of home and its localities is one of these. Wander where he may,—however far, and however long,—man looks back to the place of his birth, and the scenes of his boyhood, as the centre of attraction, around which the warmest feelings of his heart have their play. He visits these scenes with emotions of the deepest interest, and by the power of association, lives over again the years of his childhood. On this principle, the natives of the north dwell happily amidst eternal snows, brave the rude boreal blast, contentedly subsist on the scanty fare furnished by the barren regions around, and cling, with the greatest tenacity, to the rocks which alike resist the swelling surges of the sea, and mark the burial-places of their fathers.

If, then, from these relations, susceptibilities so fine in themselves are originated, what ought to be the love subsisting between the pastor and his flock? They stand in the most endearing connection to each other which it is possible to conceive. Besides, embracing every thing which is virtuous and benevolent in natural affection, it rests as well on spiritual grounds. Has the minister been the instrument of awakening and leading some to the knowledge of the truth, and to an interest in Christ? How strong the love which must arise out of this! St. Paul adverts to it under the notion of a father dwelling amongst his children, whilst they reciprocate his affection. Has he been the means of "*helping their joys*" in the day of conflict, temptation, and sorrow; of strengthening their faith, when sorely perplexed by doubts and fears; of leading them to higher attainments in the spiritual life, when care, and trouble, and sin, pressed upon them; of quickening their devotions, when their hands hung down, and they had little relish for intercourse with God; of leading them into the holiest, to hold fellowship and converse with the Father of spirits, and to dwell in the light of his countenance; and, in the midst of dark and cloudy circumstances, animating them with the hope of a blissful immortality? How ardent must be the attachment generated by these circumstances! Have they met together at the Lord's table; borne testimony alike in the church to the goodness of God, and the truth and power of religion; shared in common the dangers and temptations of the christian life; been mutually blessed by the care and mercy of the great and good shepherd; mingled their prayers at the throne of grace; and met each other amidst the interchanges of a sanctified, christian, and anticipated,

immortal friendship. How deep and permanent must be the love arising from such associations.

Were finer feelings, or a more touching scene, ever witnessed, than we beheld the other day around the grave of DAVID M'NICOLL? In the multitude of persons; their grave and serious demeanour; their deep and unfeigned sorrow; and the respect paid to departed excellency; we had a display of the strength, tenderness, and purity of those affections which grow up between the faithful minister and his flock. There is no deception in these emotions. In following the triumphal car of a living hero, it is possible to be dazzled and excited by the splendour of the pageantry, and the glory of the scene. But death speaks the language of truth; and when his stroke falls upon a christian, awakens the dormant energies of the multitude, and attracts them to his tomb, it is a certain sign of excellency in the departed, and affection in the living. The translation of our beloved friend, has touched a chord in the hearts of the people here, which, perhaps, nothing else could have done to the same extent; and its deep-toned reverberation, is not only an honour conferred upon human nature, but homage paid to religion in the person of the departed, and an honourable testimony borne to the tender attachment subsisting between ministers and people.

In the midst of these sorrows on the part of survivors, joy belongs to the departed, from his union with the church in its glorified state. He is not lost to the great world of religion, but is transferred to a new, more interesting, and exalted part of the "*one family in heaven and on earth.*" He leaves that which remains in its probation, for the one which has finished its course of trial, and entered into a state of



consummated and perfect bliss. The same objects and themes which called forth his studies, devotion, and adoration on earth, engage his attention now, but presented to him in entirely new aspects. His companionship above is with the saints; but they are free from error, passion, and sin; and there is no intermixture of worldly minds, to break his peace, to mar his pleasures, to sully his purity, or to offend his holy and elevated taste. He ranges now amid scenes of knowledge, of the highest, the most interesting, and sublime description; but he neither beholds them in the same dim light as on earth, nor with encumbered and enfeebled faculties. The joys of his new state, embrace the same subjects as those which occupied him below; the love of God, the benefits of redemption, the work of grace, the hallowed feelings of the spiritual life; but there, they exist in unmixed perfection, and are developed in the glorious regions of immortality. The changes, additions, and super-added themes, as they lie beyond our observation, cannot be, at present, matters of knowledge, except so far as they are revealed in the Word of God; but there is every reason to conclude from the dim and distant notices given us, that the heavenly state, in this respect, will exalt in infinite measures of bliss, the condition of those who attain its possession. Set free from the body and its infirmities, the prescribed and limited range of the senses, the localities of earth, and the low and uncongenial employments of time, the soul will range in a wider sphere, become conversant with grander and more elevated objects, and, with an ease and facility, of which we can form no adequate conception, rise to possess the whole.

The divine Being, it seems from Scripture, will then be seen in brighter vision, be enjoyed in greater nearness,

and receive from the glorified Church, a perfect fealty, and an unmeasured and ever increasing love. *“For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known.”* *“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”* *“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”* *“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face: and his name shall be in their foreheads.”* These, and similar expressions, indicate that God will manifest himself in light and glory, in the heavenly state. The objection, that being a spirit, He cannot reveal himself in sensible manifestations, is obviated by the consideration, that man too is a spirit. When freed from the infirmities of a material organization, there can be no reason why he should not become conversant with immaterial forms. The entire region of the spiritual world becomes open to the observation and knowledge of the soul, as soon as it quits the body. And, as the resources of creative power and love, are not limited to the world in which we live, so it is certain, that the spiritual world teems with immaterial existence, in every form of beauty and perfection. To these varied objects, the senses of an immortal mind may be as exquisitely adapted as those which are now exercised on the physical world. If so, it would be strange indeed, if the departed saints had no means of beholding the glories of God. What does this sensible intercourse amount to, but spirit

meeting spirit, in happy converse, on the great theatre of an immaterial world. But the effect of this on the state and feelings of the glorified church, must be perfectly transporting. No force, no mandatory authority, no ordinances, no curative means, no coercive providences, no excitement can there be necessary to unite the whole host of perfected saints in the adoring and eternal love of God. Existing as the great centre of attraction, in manifested glory and sensible light; speaking to them in audible language; and pouring forth the full tide of his goodness on natures now free from every evil bias, low passion, sordid feeling; and capable of responding to the opening beauties of a perfect intelligence, purity, and love; they can need no other influence to lead them to His throne, and attach them to Himself, in constantly augmenting joy.

In the final state of the Church, the Redeemer must occupy the exalted position which belongs to him, after having accomplished his great mediatorial work. All the extraordinary features of that magnificent undertaking, will then appear in their true light. As the efficiency of any agency to accomplish great purposes is best seen in the effect produced, so the real character of redemption will be most perfectly illustrated in its glorious fruits. In their separate and detached particulars, they may, to the eye of unenlightened reason, be looked upon as very insignificant. Not, indeed, that they are so in themselves, but it should seem from the general indifference of mankind, that they are so considered. When however they see the whole consummated, brought to its final issue, and the entire scheme wound up to its grand result, whether they behold it in heaven or in hell, they will entertain different views. How glorious will the Saviour then appear, when the councils of God

are accomplished ; the predictions of every age fulfilled ; the world redeemed ; all nations visited and enlightened ; a countless number from amongst all people saved ; the dead of every generation raised ; the final sentence pronounced ; and his throne surrounded by "*a great multitude which no man can number.*" The value of the provisions of the christian economy, is seen in some measure on earth, in the pardon of the guilty, the moral elevation of the degraded in sin, and the hopes and happiness inspired ; but this is only incipient good. It is the seed in process of vegetation ; the ripe fruit has yet to appear. It will be manifested in all its perfection in the Church above ; and in the midst of its display, the Saviour will receive the glory belonging to his character and work. But whilst this is the case, the subjects of this great salvation, will be placed in circumstances to appreciate the plan of boundless love, in its just proportions. How transcendently important and valuable will that death appear, which took place on the cross, in the midst of the scoffs of the multitude, and which is now derided by the philosopher, as the confidence of fools ; when it is seen, that from it flows all the bliss of eternal life. How grand the gospel scheme, now meandering its way through the lowly places of the world, and gaining its triumphs in the midst of poverty, ignorance, and barbarism, when viewed as the instrument of peopling heaven ! How potent those influences of the kingdom of God, which silently, like the dew of heaven, soften the heart, and produce their moral results, unobserved, in the midst of the pomp of earthly things ; when it is perceived, that its fruits have survived the overthrow of empires, and the decay of nature itself, and shine forth in the purity and happiness of myriads of

immortal spirits ! But above all, in how different a light must the personal glories and rights of Messiah appear, when all those who on earth have rejected him, as a consequence, are lost ; and all those who have followed him "*in the regeneration,*" are exalted "*to glory, immortality, and eternal life.*" The perfections of the Godhead must, and, indeed, will attract the saints to their own light, but the "*Lamb in the midst of the throne,*" must be honoured as the grand medium of their exaltation. The redeemed are heard to sing, and the song will be for ever new : "*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*"

But Jesus Christ is "*the head of all principality and power.*" The angelic world, it seems, forms a part of his triumphant church. We know not by what principle, they are united to the heavenly hierarchy, but they associate with the happy spirits of the departed, and join in their triumphant praises. "*And after this I beheld, and lo, a great number which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands : and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen : blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.*" Here, these exalted intelligences are represented as taking their place within the courts of the upper temple, standing around the

throne, mingling with the sanctified souls of men, uniting in their acts of adoration and ascriptions of praise, and constituting a part of "*the Church of the first-born*" in its final state.

In this glorified church, "*every man will appear in his own order.*" Prophets, apostles, evangelists, as well as the ordinary pastors of the church, will have laid aside their office; but they will not forfeit their identity, or lose their reward. Moses and Elias were known on the mount of transfiguration, in their public and prophetic character, though inhabitants of the spiritual world. As the glory of successful war attends the hero, long after he has quitted the field of contest, and retired to the peace and privacy of common life; so the distinctions and honours of any office in the church, will continue in heaven, though the insignia be laid aside. For these reasons, ministers of the gospel will be attended by the fruits of their studies, labours, and successes. The testimony will be finished; the oracle silenced; the trumpet laid aside; and the prophecy closed; but the individual remains, and shares a state of reward proportioned to the elevation of his piety, and the extent of his labours.

This prospect may well afford joy. The union of a christian with the Church militant is indeed a matter of thankfulness, as it is the source of innumerable blessings; but his admission to the Church triumphant, and participation in its felicities, is a source of transcendently greater happiness. In the present state, the highest enjoyment must be intermixed with sorrow; whereas, in the next, it will flow in eternal fulness. Some portion of this is occasionally imparted, as the soul passes towards the grave, and attains a near and bright prospect of that heaven which lies beyond the flood of

death. This is an interesting moment of existence. One world receding from the vision, and another on the point of being revealed, in all its unknown grandeurs. If reflection be granted to the dying minister, how interesting the retrospect, how impressive the anticipation ! He feels that he is quitting that part of the Church, whose platform of operations rests on earth, in the midst of ignorance, hostility, and sin ; whose piety, privileges, and enjoyments exist in the midst of innumerable temptations, exercises, and dangers ; whose disciples are often found amongst the poor, afflicted, and distressed ; whose triumphs are gained by incessant toils, privations, and sacrifices ; and whose union is constantly broken by the inroads of faction, the fall of backsliders, and the death of its friends ; and whilst he quits these scenes, the feelings of the man cause him to mourn, but the views of the christian enable him to rejoice. But it is the prospect of union with the glorified part of the Church which imparts to him his chief joy. O how different to scenes of earth ! Its foundations are in the heavens ; its Eden blooms in immortality ; its holiness and love are unmixed ; its peace is never disturbed by one ruffling passion ; the harmony of its brotherhood is never broken by sin or death ; and its services, instead of being wearisome, flow on in natural and spontaneous freedom ; the soul and the duty answer to each other, in the sweet symphony of perfect concord. In this state, the departing minister takes his place : thus *“finishing his course with joy, and the ministry he has received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”*

III. The joyous death of ministers, pre-eminently illustrates the power of divine grace, and places the seal of their last testimony to the doctrines they have delivered.

If he has taught the doctrine of atonement, and is now seen leaning on it in death for acceptance, the act illustrates its efficacy, and may be considered his dying attestation to this truth. Although works, flowing from faith, may be the rule of judgment with God in dealing with the final state of every one, yet, they can never be trusted in as the ground of dependance by the well-instructed christian, or the most laborious minister. The *atonement* is the altar where he places all he has ever known, or suffered, or done, for acceptance with the Lord, as well as for personal pardon and peace. He brings his life, his labours, his ministry, to this great propitiation, and presents the whole to God, not through their own intrinsic value—for they have none—but through the merit of the cross. These exercises are often most interesting and instructive. Instead of reviewing the past with absolute complacency, as forming a title to the inheritance of heaven, the most elevated christians and eminent ministers, have been found to renounce all they ever did, as utterly valueless in the balance of impartial justice; and instead of pleading this as the ground of hope, they have placed their works where they place their sins, and sought favour with God through the blood of Jesus alone. It never fails. It gives victory in death, as well as confidence and peace in life. Placed between the retrospections of an expiring life, and the anticipations of an approaching eternity, the cross is an invulnerable shield against the accusations of guilt, and, at the same time, like the pillar of fire in the wilderness, throws its light on the darkness of the grave.

The last devotions of the dying believer, are presented to God through this medium. The closing exercises of a soul just taking its flight from a dispensation of me-



diation, to one of retribution, must be deeply interesting. The cross is always the theme of the departing saint ; and whatever sentiments may have intermingled themselves with his living experience, nothing is heard from his dying pillow, but confidence in Jesus. The last words of expiring christians are considered precious and sacred ; but, if the vail could be lifted up, and their intercourse with Christ beheld, it would be seen as of surpassing interest. The final application of the soul to Jesus, as death approaches, is a farewell resort to the blood of sprinkling, and the Mediator's throne for the possession of those last and perfective communications of grace, which prepare her to meet God in those regions of immutable purity, where the remedial provisions of the gospel cease ; and where, instead of being softened down to the gaze by an economical arrangement, the perfections of the Deity shine forth in their absolute splendour.

The atonement is the sanctifying offering, through which the triumphant christian gives up *himself* finally to God. Being redeemed, he knows that his body shall sleep in Jesus, and be safe in his keeping, though its substance be dissolved into common dust ; and at the last day it shall rise in glory—whilst the soul, participating in the purifying power of this cleansing blood, passes, in its bridal robes,—“*the righteousness of saints*,”—into the immediate presence of God. No man, who has any just apprehension of the purity of heaven ; the immaculate justice, and awful majesty of God ; or of that bright and dazzling glory which breaks forth from his throne ; can desire to go into the divine presence otherwise than by the merit of the Saviour's blood ; and, he must seek to be presented by his attendant presence. To this extent the actual mediation

of Christ reaches. All the interests of his people are secured by it, even to an introduction into the presence of God, and an entrance into "*the heaven of heavens.*"

This is a practical testimony, borne in the most awful and least deceptive moment of human existence, to the value of this great provision of christianity. There can be no deception in this. That which is uniform is true; and all dying believers in the atonement, attest that they find in it an adequate ground of confidence; an inspiring hope; a valid and satisfactory title to heaven; a bridge on which they dare boldly venture to cross the gulph interposing betwixt time and eternity; and a merit which answers to the guilt of their sins; as well as a cleansing power which washes them all away. This being the testimony of all true Christians, it follows, that it must be an universal delusion, or the uniform evidence of a most cheering truth. Considered simply as a phenomenon of mind, and an operation of nature, it would be extremely difficult to account for this on any other principle than its reality. Nature is not wont to deceive her children. And it is impossible to admit religion to have any foundation in truth, and especially to be divine, on the supposition that any deception can be allowed in such circumstances. Surely God would not permit his immortal offspring to be deluded, in their dying moments, with false hopes. Consequently the invariable confidence placed on the atonement in these instances, is the true faith exercising itself on a real and valid object; and its victories are the admirable triumphs of the soul over the fear of death, through him who has "*conquered death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.*"

In ministers, this testimony is valuable; because it is a personal and dying confirmation of the most capital

doctrine of their ministry. It is very different to a logical, verbal, or professional sanction given to a great truth. It goes much beyond discussion, exposition, or description. The power and eloquence of their discourses, may have exhibited the Saviour in his glory; his death in its virtue and merit; his salvation in its fulness; and they may have been the instruments of pointing many weary and heavy laden sinners to the rest of his grace. But no effort of their genius to do honour to this great work, can be so instructive in itself, or so honourable to their Lord, as the last exertions of the soul, to place itself exclusively on this ark for security in the swelling flood. Their tongue may falter, while the soul swells with emotion; the countenance brighten with joy, while the last lingering accents of confidence and love quiver on their lips, and, like the whispers of the evening breeze, gently die away in the silence of death.

Faithful ministers have also borne witness to the doctrine of the *Spirit's influence*—if they manifest its grace and power in their dying moments, their testimony is complete. Religious *peace* never appears so divine, as in the death-bed scenes of the saints. To behold the soul tranquil and undismayed in the midst of disease and pain; the retiring interests of the world of sense; the tenderness of human sorrows; and the certain prospect of an early grave; argues the presence of the Almighty Spirit, and the powerful support of divine grace. Either stupid insensibility, or regrets and alarms, must be the state of a soul destitute of the "*anointing of the Holy One*," in the approach of the last enemy. In case a higher feeling prevails, in union with just views of the majesty of God; the justice of his throne; and the evils of sin; it shows

that the Comforter is taking "*the things of Christ*," and in the last extremity of the probationary state, applying them in sustaining and sanctifying peace to the mind.

The dying joys of the christian finely illustrate the immutable agency, as well as the omnipotent operation, of the Holy Spirit. How fine and striking the contrast, in these circumstances, between the material frame, and the immaterial spirit. The one ceases to obey the volitions of the mind, and lies an emaciated and prostrate ruin, whilst the spirit soars in regions of elevated feeling. Though not, perhaps, of the essence of the work of grace, or necessary as evidence of a safe and happy state, it pleases God on some occasions, to raise the departing saint into an ecstasy of joy. When granted, this illustrates two interesting points of religious truth—the immaterial nature of the soul, and the sufficiency and adaptation of spiritual influence to all her exigencies. Wound up by this divine influence, the mind is seen to exhibit, not merely a common amount of religious acuteness of perception, comprehension of thought, and vigour of joy, but far to surpass the ordinary exercises of piety. What, but a nature in itself mental, and lying beyond the reach of material disease, could be capable of such feelings in the debility and agony of dying circumstances: and, what but an omnipotent spirit could so touch the springs of our spiritual being, as to cause the soul to stand up in so lofty a majesty, and throw around her exit from the world, so bright a glory.

The divine *affections* which are displayed in softened tenderness, or glow with animated warmth, on the death bed of the saints, show that the life of religion is fed by a supernatural agency. Whether in life or

death, "*he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*" The capacity to love sacred things originates in, and proves the existence of religious principle and privilege. In the creation of the new man; the spiritual judgment; the taste for the beauties of divine truth; as well as the graces which so strongly develop themselves; a link and medium of fellowship betwixt the soul and God is produced, and sentiments exist in the heart with which he can hold communion. The natural passions belong to the social and external world. They expire with the passing away of their attractive and fascinating objects. Notwithstanding this, christian believers often—except prevented by the nature of their disease—manifest more tender and animated love in death, than in life. In this, evidence is given, "strong as proof of holy writ," that the *principle* of divine love remains entire; that it is nurtured and strengthened by the Spirit of God; and also, that all its appropriate objects stand vividly present to the perceptions of the soul.

The lofty aspirings and *hopes* manifested in these circumstances, indicate that a sacred commerce is going on,—sustained and animated by the Holy Spirit,—between the immortal nature, and the world of spirits. How seldom any regrets are uttered on leaving the world by the followers of the Saviour. In nearly all observable cases, which have fallen under my own notice, a striking preparation to quit the present scene, connected with a perfect acquiescence in the will of God, have been manifested by departing christians. Affliction and suffering may have their effect in weaning the mind from the world; but this kind of discipline, cannot, of itself, produce a willingness to depart. As in the case of dying Stephen, the heavens

must open to the spiritual vision, and Jesus be seen on the right hand of God, to attract the soul, and fill it with an active and animated anticipation of eternal life. Why is it thought incredible, that God should, in an extraordinary degree, remove the cloud which obscures our perception of the invisible state, and, as the pilgrim approaches the confines of the two worlds, show him the outline of the distant heaven of his love? The communing of the saint with God at this season; the tender and ardent love he bears to the Saviour; the exquisite delicacy of his spiritual feelings; the comprehension of his views; the awful nearness in which he perceives the Deity and angelic beings to stand to himself; the brightening prospects which are opening to his gaze; together with the strength he puts forth to meet the coming glories; unite to show, that he is under the guidance and support of a supernatural power, bearing him onward to enter heaven with joy.

It may be presumed, that, as ministers are called to make these subjects the matter of their studies and preaching, so they will have an accurate knowledge of their real evidences. If their own experience on the approach of death, gives vitality to the previous doctrines they have taught, then they bear witness to the truth of their teaching, by their last testimony. It is not the theory of divine influence existing in the mind of the departing pastor, as the ideal outline of past meditations and preaching, which can now animate and inspire his soul with sentiments of hope and joy. When nature is feeble and expiring, all these previous studies of the truth, can only of themselves exist as the laws of life exist in winter—dormant and inert. It is when the vernal sun and the showers of spring visit the earth, that the hidden springs of life are

touched, which impel the encircling fluids through the veins of nature, and produce a state of luxuriant fertility. So when a preparation for another world is needed, it is not the existence of stores of collected knowledge, and doctrinal sentiment, which can give vitality to the soul; it is the energetic influence of the Holy Spirit operating on that admitted truth; so that when we behold ministers of religion departing in a state of happiness and triumph, we must attribute it to the power of the promised Comforter giving confirmation to the doctrines they hold.

Faith now displays its most vigorous power, and adventures on its boldest essays. As sense, reason, and imagination subside, and loose their hold on the visible creation, and they find within them, a faculty which gives "*substance to things hoped for, and evidence of things not seen as yet,*" then, they both exercise and manifest the faith they have long taught. And if, when the last stroke is felt, they are enabled to cry out as they receive the blow, "*O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;*" then faith has performed its perfect work; and as the life and ministry of these men of God were employed in setting forth the truth, so their death stamps the whole with the evidence of genuineness and sincerity.

Thus in the main lived and died our much esteemed friend, a sketch of whose character, according to my own imperfect views, I beg to subjoin.

MR. M'NICOLL possessed those powers of mind which caused him to stand out from the general mass of mankind in prominent, definite, and distinctive character. He was one of the men of the age, and the community to which he belonged, who could not be lost in the crowd, or mingled, without mark or notice, indiscriminately, amongst the ordinary characters of his profession. Without effort, or design, on his own part, the prominence of his mental faculties, his ordinary conversation, and even the most ineffective discharge of his public duties, could not but arrest the attention of his contemporaries, and they must at once mark him out as a genius. It is extremely difficult, sometimes, to seize the most prominent features of mind, and even when so perceived, it is equally difficult, with delicacy, precision, and fidelity, to communicate the impression. In order to bring Mr. M'Nicoll, as fully and clearly before you as I can, I shall consider him, in *his mental*, *his ministerial*, and *his religious character*.

1. There is a basis of mental strength, and an element of qualities in every man which must give character to all the productions and developements of mind. This is of great importance in religious men, and especially in ministers; for although Divine grace is the true principle and cause of all holy and sanctified feeling, yet, as the light of the sun is reflected in varied beauty from the different formations of nature; so the light of truth, the power of religious principle, the hallowing influence of the Holy Spirit, and the ennobling tenderness of Christian love, must all take their tone and colouring from the natural characteristics of the mind in which they exist, and from which they are reflected on the attention of the Church and the world. If the mind of Mr. M'Nicoll be fairly analyzed, and the distinctive features of his intellect traced to their primary element, I believe he must be ranked amongst the poetic and imaginative class of mankind. Other very strong and vigorous qualities belonged to him, but this was the leading, predominant, and primary. He was a metaphysician. He wrote, sometimes



preached, and often conversed with his friends on subjects of metaphysical science ; but it was never in dry and scholastic terms. Even in this subtle field of thought, he invariably invested the most abstruse speculations in the language of fancy and imagination, taking care to clothe his metaphysical forms, as God clothed the spirit of man, in a tangible and beautiful body. He had great acuteness and strong reasoning powers ; but even in the employment of this faculty, fancy was so predominant, that he would begin his process of arguing at any point where his mind happened to be floating at the time,—the circumference, or the summit of his theme,—and, when questioned, had to find his way down to first principles, sometimes by a difficult and circuitous route. When, however, he laid aside imagination, and took time to adjust his principles and lay his foundation, his deductions, ratiocinations, and modes of illustration were convincing and irresistible. These powers of reasoning and metaphysical subtlety are not at all at variance with our position, that the leading features of Mr. M'Nicoll's mind were poetic. One of our most eminent living poets is not more celebrated for the chaste, simple, touching, and natural grace of his verse, than for a subtle, inspiring, or metaphysical spirit, which lives and breathes in every thing he writes.

It was this same spirit which caused Mr. M'Nicoll to dwell much more in the world of ideas than in the world of living things. Hence, he had no taste for business, knew extremely little of secular concerns, and even took no very lively interest in the stirring political questions of his time. His mind sought a purer region ; and whilst other men were busily engaged in attaining the rewards of business and ambition, his soul was expatiating in the universe of abstract being, or roaming amidst the beauties of nature, or the great truths of religion. This feature was very strongly marked. Not giving himself to meditate much on worldly things, it followed, that whilst others were fretting and exciting themselves by the presence or apprehension of impending evils, he was free from care and lived in great ease and happiness.

A taste for the beautiful, as a feature of Mr. M'Nicoll's peculiar mental constitution, was also very predominant. He had a most lively perception of the beautiful in nature. His friends have listened with the highest pleasure to his descriptions of the picturesque scenery he had beheld on his journies in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, as well as in various parts of this country. On these occasions he so grouped his different objects, as to present his hearers with a fine ideal landscape; whilst his spirit seemed to throw life into the scenery; and his animated countenance, his sparkling eye, and the action of his hand, indicated the absorption of his soul, and how deeply he had taken the impression of what he was describing to others. But his perception of the beautiful was not limited to living forms. He equally enjoyed whatever was exquisite and delicate in sentiment, in music, and in literature. He was a diligent, and, at intervals, a constant reader of both the ancient and modern poets, a great admirer of the fine arts, and had himself, as many here know, a great taste for music. I have seen him sitting in perfect tranquillity, reading Horace or Virgil in the midst of a hundred people at a public meeting, during the most exciting debates, amidst clamour and vociferation sufficient to disturb the equanimity of any mind which had not amazing powers of abstraction, or of strength to rise from the passing excitement of the moment to fasten on pictures of hidden and ideal beauty. Even his well-known taste for old books may be intimately connected with the poetic bias of his mind. Nothing, indeed, at first sight, appears more discordant than a relish for the living fragrance and beauties of nature, and a fondness for old and antiquated literature. But for the same reason that the man of imagination lingers with delight in the midst of the hoary grandeur of rocks and mountains, the ruins of forsaken castles, and the graves and monuments of the departed dead, so he may, by the exercise of the same taste, take pleasure in antiquated forms of thought and modes of writing. Be this as it may, we have another certain indication that the nature of our

beloved friend's mental constitution was essentially imaginative; it is his copiousness and power of invention. When he could be got fairly into a subject, instead of dwindling in his hands, it appeared a creation. Taking his start from some point of original thought, he, with almost intuitive power of invention, threw around it, as from a centre, sentiment on sentiment, adorned with sparkling beauties of expression and illustration, till the primary idea was lost in the creations of imagination, just as the seed is forgotten in the growth, foliage, blossoms, and fruit of the plant. As in the case of most men of genius, if any thing dry, barren, and halting, was ever discovered, it was in the commencement only of the exercise. When he had fairly escaped the breakers around the shore, and felt himself out in deep water, he made rapid way, carrying his audience much farther than they expected to go.

2. A man who was so strikingly marked in his mental constitution, must of necessity be so in his *ministerial qualifications*. In his doctrinal sentiments Mr. M'Nicoll was thoroughly evangelical, and subordinated all his opinions to the authority of the word of God. He held the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,—the proper Deity of the Son and the Spirit,—the atonement of Christ and justification by faith alone;—regeneration and sanctification, together with the eternity of future rewards and punishments, as essential and fundamental verities of religion. He had read all the best authors, ancient and modern, on these questions: they lay at the basis of his own ministry, and he was always prepared to illustrate and defend them; and instead of merely making them heads in a common-place system of theology, he studied them separately and fully. It was Mr. M'Nicoll's practice to take up some grand question in divinity as a theme, and not only study it by the exercise of his own original powers, but collect the opinions of all the authors within his reach, and then, uniting the scattered rays of truth in a common focus, throw the illumination on the minds of his congregations. In this way he was engaged on the question of the divi-

nity of the Son of God, as the Son, a short time ago; and he told me, that he was so deeply interested, and fully satisfied with the subject, that he should be obliged to preach on it in order to get it dismissed from his mind. The manner in which he entered into subjects of theology, if not singular, was striking. He often pursued a question to such lengths, that his mind was so entirely absorbed, that he could not free himself so as to attend to the more ordinary duties of his calling. He informed me that when he was called to preach a sermon in this chapel, on the death of the late Peter Jones, he was so taken up with the matters of the discourse, that for several weeks, he could scarcely feel and consider himself an inhabitant of this world. For days and weeks he would pursue a topic, to the exclusion of all other subjects of reflection, till having mastered the difficulties, pushed it to the very verge of other regions of truth, or exhausted the powers of his mind, he would turn to other studies. In the practice of preaching itself, Mr. M'Nicoll was extremely variable: this may be partly accounted for from the peculiarity just mentioned. When his powers were needed for immediate employment, they were sometimes, as we have seen, deeply absorbed in other speculations. Besides this, Mr. M'Nicoll was more an extemporaneous preacher than most persons who occupy the pulpit. His preparations were very meagre—the thoughts of his discourses were written on the least scraps of paper. In consequence of this, his ministry necessarily greatly depended on his health and on his congregations; but when circumstances favoured the effort—when he had prepared himself fully for his task, and had a people disposed to listen to him, his preaching partook of every quality of greatness. It always rested on sound doctrinal views. Originality of thought, reason, pathos, animation, imagination, together with a deep concern for the good of souls and the glory of God, united to make him a most eloquent and powerful pulpit orator. On these great occasions, his mind appeared to expand and rise to all the dignity and solemnity of his theme;

and he poured forth the torrents of a noble and overpowering eloquence, to the great delight and edification of his audiences. He then never attempted to spare himself, but put forth all his strength. His conceptions of God, of the great work of redemption, of the riches of Divine grace, of the beauties and privileges of experimental religion, of the awful realities and stupendous importance of eternity, and of the final state of all men, were most profound, and painted in vivid and lively colours. His action was perfectly natural and unstudied; and whilst the greatness of his subjects roused him to the highest animation, the different topics of his discourse modulated the tones of his mellifluous voice in beautiful and musical cadences.

The affection now manifested towards him by all classes, shows in what light he was held as a pastor. Those who knew him best, loved and esteemed him most. Wherever he was stationed, he ranked amongst his private and intimate friends, all the most intelligent, pious, and well-informed of the people. He was gladly and cordially hailed in their families, and his conversation being always instructive, entertaining, and religious, was listened to with delight. Indeed his colloquial powers were amongst his most remarkable gifts. He was never obtrusive or dogmatical. Ease, simplicity, and freedom invariably marked his conversation; and when excited, it sometimes rose to great brilliancy and beauty. From the stores of his highly cultivated mind he interested the younger branches of families, whilst at the same time, he delighted and instructed the elder. Even persons indifferent to religion, heard his discourse on sacred subjects with toleration, and often, with silent and approving pleasure. He had a heart to sympathise with all persons; and if on the subject of his pastoral character, any fault was found, it did not relate to the inquisitorial obtrusiveness of his visits to his flock, but that they were not sufficiently frequent. Whilst Mr. M'Nicoll held himself bound to be faithful to the church to which he was united as a minister—and to which there is good reason to know he was from principle and affection cordially attached—

he maintained a most catholic spirit towards all other denominations of Christians. Indeed, not a spark of bigotry dwelt in his soul. He was too noble in his nature, had studied Christianity on too large a scale, and entertained too lofty views of the destinies of the Church and of the world, to be a sectarian bigot; and hence, he was always ready to assist and help forward, all the religious institutions of the day.

3. The religious character of Mr. M'Nicoll is of most importance.

In his case religion did not stand out in stiff and formal singularities; but intermingled its principles, devotions, and joys, with all the feelings of his mind, and the every-day business and pursuits of life. He did not form his character on the frigid notions of the ascetic, or the monk: but taking the gospel as the model of his spirit, conversation, and life, he blended the amenities, charities, and duties of the Word of God in all things; and religion, in him, had all the simplicity of a natural element of his moral constitution. Hence, when he walked the streets, or attended any of his distant places, he appeared, almost invariably, with a religious book in his hand, in which he read occasionally as he passed along, to furnish his mind with profitable matter of reflection. He also entered on religious conversation in the presence of strangers, with the utmost ease and freedom from embarrassment. He never had to call home his powers, but discoursed with a familiarity natural and habitual to the feelings and tastes of his mind.

*Purity* is another characteristic of Mr. M'Nicoll. After a long and intimate acquaintance, I do not recollect ever hearing a gross sentiment from his lips. He not only taught the purity of the gospel, but in a very high degree lived in it himself. His spirit caught in this respect, the sanctity, greatness, and elevation of the subjects of his meditations and studies. Like Moses, when he had been on the Mount, his mind shone in the radiance of that light and holiness, which an intimate walk with God can alone impart. If the conversation be "in heaven the heart must be there also."

We believe the trust of our beloved friend in God, was habitual and constant. He had much in his private walk, his public employments, and the state of his numerous family, to put his confidence to the test. He never betrayed any distrust. The Saviour's merit, and the all-sufficient grace of God, were the grounds of his personal reliance; and his mind was too much enlightened, and influenced by sanctified feeling, to believe that those in whom he had an interest were the sport of chance. On one occasion, in a state of apprehended danger, when Mrs. M'Nicoll betrayed some emotion and fear, he exclaimed "*never fear, my dear, there is not such a thing as a fatherless child in the world.*" He meant to intimate by this, that, though he might be called from her by death, God would be the father of their children. This was not the sentiment and feeling of the moment, but the habitual state of his mind; and it was carried not only into the anticipated event of his family being left without a head, but into all the occurrences of life, and tended to produce that settled peace and tranquillity of which he was so remarkable an instance. Of all the men I ever saw, Mr. M'Nicoll always appeared to me as the happiest. Whatever combination of influences might produce it, his was a happy religion. No envy, moroseness, melancholy, discontent, or ambitious inquietude ever darkened the fair sunshine of his soul. He never put himself to grapple with impossibilities, to fight with the ghosts of imaginary evils, to repine over the past, or anticipate some evil to come. He placed himself in faith on the current of providential events; he was thankful for the comforts and privileges he enjoyed, derived good from every occurrence, and rose from the present, to taste in anticipation, all the glory of the future.

Although death came suddenly, he was not unlooked for, and, we believe, not unwelcome. To my certain knowledge Mr. M'Nicoll had been expecting sudden death for the past seven or eight years. When we were together in London, he often mentioned it as an event upon which he calculated, and even then expected soon. Since I have been in Liverpool, he has

repeated the same apprehension, with this difference, that at the first period I refer to, he seemed to look forward to it with some fear ; in the latter, with pleasure. In a long conversation, held a short time ago, as we walked up and down by the side of the Cemetery ; after largely dwelling on the shortness and vanities of life, together with the glories of the heavenly state ; he, with great solemnity and strong feeling, stated his willingness and readiness to go, whenever it might please God to call him. This was not the only conversation of the same kind ; but on several occasions, he entered most delightfully into these subjects, and spoke of religion and heaven, as a man on the verge of another world. The impression was so deep on my own mind, that I went home from one of these interviews, and said in my own family, "*our friend Mr. M'Nicoll will not live long.*" Being asked, why I thought so—the reply was, "his soul is mellowing for heaven—God is preparing him for himself." So it has proved. But, after all, sudden death is always unexpected at the time. He was peculiarly happy on the evening of his decease, in the bosom of his family. His elder son had come from London, on a visit ; one or two younger ones from the schools ; and, by a merciful arrangement of providence, the whole eleven were present. With smiles of delight, he beheld them around his table ; spoke freely and cheerfully to them ; and then, in the spirit of the patriarch Jacob, when he leaned on his staff, and blessed his children before he died, he knelt down, entered into their several cases, earnestly and pathetically besought the Divine blessing on them, commended them to his care and love, and then went up stairs and in a few moments expired.

"How many die as sudden, not as safe."





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CHRIST THE AUTHOR AND END OF CIVIL  
GOVERNMENT.

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**A S E R M O N,**  
**PREACHED AT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH,**  
**POOLE,**

**ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1836,**  
**BEFORE THE**  
**MAYOR, ALDERMEN, AND OTHER MEMBERS**  
**OF THE**  
**CORPORATE BODY;**  
**AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST.**

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**BY THE**  
**REV. W. M. DUDLEY, B. A.**

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**MDCCCXXXVI.**



## S E R M O N.

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COLOSSIANS, i., 16.

*“ Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him.”*

WHEN the apostle Peter enforces obedience to civil governors, he grounds his injunctions upon the motive of our regard for God ; “ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man *for the Lord's sake* : whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” The reason of this is to be seen in the text, in that, as “ all things, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, were created *by* Christ ; so they were also created *for* Christ.”

By the different terms here used, some (and Melancthon amongst the number) understand the different orders of civil magistrates amongst men.

This application of the text is supported by a parallel scripture in Titus, chap. iii., verse 1st, where principalities and powers are, obviously, referred to the different orders of civil magistrates. And therefore in this sense, without presuming to exclude a more extended one, it is my intention to apply them.

I conceive then, we have, in the words of the text, Jesus Christ set forth as the first cause and last end of all things; but *especially* of civil government.

In the first place—Christ is the first cause of all things.

All things were created by him.

“God, (saith the author of the epistle to the Hebrews,) who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, *by whom also he made the worlds.*” “In the beginning (saith St. John) was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God: *all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*”

And as it is true of every thing that exists, that it received its being, or was made, by Christ, so is it, *in particular*, true,—of civil government,—that it received its appointment from him. Yes, “whether they, to whom civil authority is distributed, be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created *by Christ.*”

Should there be any doubt of the legitimate application of the text to inanimate as well as animate creation,—to things as well as persons, it is cleared up by the next verse ; which informs us that, as Christ is before all things, so by him, *all things* consist,—i. e., are kept in place—in joint—in union—in coherence. Were the Son of God to discontinue “the upholding of all things by the word of his power,” or to suspend the exercise of that creative might which first put all things in being, by a withdrawal of his preserving energy, whereby they are continued, from day to day, what he originally constituted them, they would forthwith rush back to desolation. The order of the universe,—the beauty of nature,—the combinations of matter, would melt away. The sea would break its banks—the earth crumble to atoms,—all that is now substantial become “without form and void,” and hasten to dissolution. Then, in truth, would the language of the poet be realized :

“The cloud-capp’d towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherits, be dissolved ;  
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,  
Leave not a wreck behind.”

In general, however, all things “live, and move, and have their being,” in Christ ; and in particular, “*by him kings reign, and princes decree justice,—princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.*” And such has ever been the Son of God’s appointed mode of governing the earth.

Without such a restraint upon the passions of fallen man, as that imposed by civil government, the world would soon become an "aceldema—a field of blood." This assertion is borne out by the lessons of experience. In one of the worst periods of Jewish history :—a period marked by profligacy, superstition, and slaughter ; we have this remarkable scripture, in substance, *thrice* repeated ; as if it were designed in Holy Writ to be a kind of moral finger-post, to warn the nations of the earth against falling into a similar error. "In those days there was *no king in Israel* : every man did that which was right in his own eyes."\* Hence the wretchedness of the land.

Civil government then proceeds from God himself. Christ has ordained that power shall be vested in a portion of the community, for the benefit of the whole ; and that to those invested with civil authority, others shall be responsible, as far as the general welfare is concerned. "The powers that be, (saith the apostle,) are ordained of God. Who-soever therefore resisteth the power, *resisteth the ordinance of God* : and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the

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\* See Judges xxi., 25 ; xix., 1 ; and xvii., 6, with the contexts.

minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must *needs be subject*, not only for wrath, but also for *conscience sake*." You see, brethren, St. Paul's idea of the workings of a Christian's conscience in no degree corresponds with that *professedly* religious spirit, so prevalent in our day, which frames, forsooth, *conscientious* objections to every inconvenient legal and ecclesiastical due. Wherefore, (says he,) ye (as professing Christians) must *needs be subject*, not *only* for wrath, (not only upon a principle of fear,) but *FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE*," or *on a principle of religion*. And observe, my brethren, the directions which immediately succeed this:—"For, *for this cause*, pay ye tribute also: for they are *God's ministers*, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour."

Nor, you will observe, is our obedience to the authorities of the land, to be restricted to such of them as we consider to be virtuous, and fit, in other respects, for the office they sustain. For the scripture just quoted, was addressed to the Christian Church at Rome, who lived under a civil government, which was administered by the worst possible instrument—that emperor, who, on account of his barbarity, has been designated Bloody Nero. Yet writing to those Christians, who lived under civil power, administered by such a head, and with such polluted hands, St. Paul says "There is *no power* but of God:"—implying that as all power is



originally in the possession, and under the control of Jehovah, the fact that it exists at all, in other hands, is a proof that He himself has so dispensed it; to bless us, if the civil governor be virtuous, or to prove and try us, if he be the reverse. Hence when wicked Pilate said to Christ, "Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except *it were given thee from above.*" As if Christ had said, thou hast no ground for boasting of thy ability; the power thou hast is civil power; and civil authority is not of man, but of God. Consequently, we find that those rebels who resisted the authority of Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, are said to have resisted God; for Moses the head of civil, and Aaron the head of ecclesiastical, government—or of Church and State respectively—were (in their official capacities) the delegates and representatives of God.\*

In like manner also the Israelites, in rejecting the prophet Samuel as their ruler and judge, are said to have rejected God, whose vicegerent, in those offices, he was. "And the Lord said unto Samuel, they have not rejected *thee*, but they have rejected *me*, that I should not reign over them." The caution of the Old Testament, therefore, is, "Curse not the King, no not in thy thought:" and the command of the Old Testament, "My son fear *thou* (let such as regard not God, do as they

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\* See Numbers xvi., 3, with 11th verse.

will) *the Lord, and the king* ; and meddle not with them that are given to change ;” while that of the New Testament is the same sentiment, echoed, in different words, “ Fear God. Honour the king.” Brethren, if David considered the Amalekite a murderer, for destroying his bitterest enemy, wicked king Saul, because he had slain the Lord’s anointed—if civil power, when wielded by so cruel a persecutor as Nero, or so unjust and guilty a judge as Pontius Pilate, is, nevertheless, “ power ordained by God himself ;” who can describe, in colours dark enough, the blackness of the ingratitude—the foul enormity of the sin of such as live under kings so gracious—governments so lenient—and institutions so free, as those of England, with a fretful spirit of discontent, and a feeling of stifled rebellion, which want but the fatal opportunity of power—to manifest themselves, both in their satanic character, and destructive aims ?

But we must remember that kingly authority is not circumscribed to the persons of monarchs alone. As Christ, the source of power, dispenses governing authority to the heads of nations—whether they be emperors, or kings, or princes, who represent *him*, so they dispense and distribute their authority to governors and magistrates, who therefore represent *them*. Wherefore, if we are bidden, in scripture, to “submit ourselves to the king, as the supreme” ruler, we are also bidden, by the same divine authority, to submit ourselves to *governors*, as to those who are *sent by him* ; and if we are commanded to obey principalities, we

are also commanded to obey *magistrates*. “Put them in mind” (says St. Paul to Titus ; as though the part of christian duty he was about to enjoin, was apt, from our selfishness, to be misunderstood, or disregarded,) “Put them in mind, to be subject to principalities and powers, *to obey magistrates.*” For whether, brethren, the particular authority to which civil power is distributed, be that of thrones—those sitting upon them,—or that of dominions—those ruling in them,—or that of principalities—those set over them,—or that of powers—those exercising them,—all these, as so many different parts of the same Institution, were created by Christ.

But it may be asked, is this rule of duty *absolute*? are there *no* exceptions? 1st. We answer to the objection, that bad men often fill civil offices, that our respect is rather due to the office, than to the individual who fills it. Judas was a false apostle, —a devil ; yet who would argue from this, that no respect was due to the apostolic office? And 2ndly we answer to the objection, that the commands of rulers are sometimes opposed to the commands of God, that in this case,—as the supreme authority, and depositary of all power, who distributes to earthly governors their dominion,—“God is to be obeyed *rather* than men.” We must be very watchful, however, over our spirits, that the innate principle of self love, so deeply rooted within us, which uniformly prompts impatience of control, does not bias our judgment in this matter, so as to induce us to make such civil ordinances a stumbling-

block, as have no *real* contrariety to the spirit of God's word.

In the second place—Christ is the last end of all things.

All things were created *for* him.

This latter proposition,—that “all things were created *for* Christ,”—is a natural inference of the former one,—that “all things were created *by* Christ.” If *we* make any thing by the derived understanding and ingenuity with which Christ supplies us, we make it for ourselves, to minister to our own pleasure; and it only finds favour in our eyes while it does so. Much more then, may it be said in relation to Christ, who made all things by his own *underived* wisdom, “that for his *pleasure* they are, *and were*, created.” This truth is an absolute one; there is no restriction to its extent, or modification of its meaning. In the language of Holy Writ, “the Lord hath made all things *for himself*; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” True: he did not make them for the express purpose of being wicked; such a thought is as contrary to truth, as it is revolting to our feelings. But, since human nature has become sinful, and wicked men choose to remain so, and therefore refuse the sanatives of eternal health which are provided for them,—thus preventing the glorifying of God's mercy in their behalf; they will bring him honour in another way,—they will *serve* to the glorifying of his justice in their destruction; just as some refuse materials of artisans, which will not answer the ends of workmanship, are made serviceable for the fire.

Yet, the proposition—that “all things were created for Christ”—is *especially* true of civil government: it being a leading branch of his providential economy over the world; and that particular one, which holds the framework of society together, and so provides space and opportunity for the work of the new creation to advance. And here we see the reason why the Psalmist connects the subduing of an excited populace—a work effected by the agency of civil government—with the ruling of the stormy ocean—a work more clearly manifesting the control of providence,—they are, alike, results of the same administration. “Thou stillest the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and *the tumult of the people.*” And happy, indeed, to the Church are the considerations, that however high these “floods lift up their voice, the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea:” and that whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *for Christ*.

But, I will confine myself in this division to three particulars, bearing upon the subject:

The 1st of these particulars is—

That nations were created for Christ.

This proposition we have illustrated on the largest scale—the rise and fall of the four great monarchies. The 1st of these, or Assyrian empire, was called into existence to punish the Church, by leading her captive to Babylon. The 2nd of these, or joint Median and Persian empire, was called

into being to liberate the Church, and aid her in the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem. The 3rd of these, or Macedonian empire, appears to have been called into being, to extend the Greek language,—the language of the New Testament Scriptures—over a large portion of the known world ; and in other ways to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel. And, 4thly, the Roman empire, into which the other three were incorporated, appears to have been ordained for the purpose of establishing Christianity ; which was effected by Constantine ;—an event which led to the division of whole kingdoms into parishes, and thereby gave the ministers of Christ access to some of the darkest corners of the earth.

Whether the several distinct stages, by which I arrive at my conclusion are critically correct, or only partially so ; there can be no doubt amongst Christians, of the truth of the conclusion itself—*that nations were created for Christ*. He who cannot lie, has asserted, “ All kings shall fall down before *him* ; *all nations shall serve him*.” And that Jehovah’s grand design in the creation of empires was that they might “ redound to the praise of Christ’s Glory,” in subservience to the final establishment of his church and people, is clearly manifested by the interpretation put by the prophet Daniel, upon the symbolical representation of the events of history to which I have just referred. From the ii. chap. of Daniel we learn that the king of Babylon saw in vision, an image, symbolizing the four great monarchies ; and a stone, cut out of

a mountain without hands, which fell upon the image—broke it—occupied its place—and ultimately so extended its dimensions, as to become a great mountain, which filled the earth. The head of gold—denoting the Assyrian or Babylonian empire—merged into a breast and arms of silver—denoting the Median or Persian empire. These into a belly and thighs of brass—denoting the Macedonian empire,—and these last into legs, standing upon feet, partly of iron, and partly of clay—denoting the Roman empire—upon which the little stone is falling, and the place of which it will eventually occupy by “filling the earth, as completely, as the waters cover the sea.” The stone looked very inferior to the image; yet the world was created for the stone, and not for the image. “God’s ways, brethren, are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.” Yea, the image itself did but represent four different stories of *the grand scaffolding* employed for the raising of the Church. Each successive monarchy carried forward Christ’s spiritual building another stage, and then in its turn was removed, to make way for a succeeding power. And each, more hastened the completion of the heavenly edifice than the one preceding it. Yet, though these empires filled the world with their grandeur, they were but a means to establish that cause, and honour that Saviour whom, *they*—hapless men—either knew not, or utterly despised !

Now if the greatest monarchies of the world were created for Christ, it is but reasonable to infer,

that all nations of lesser note, were so likewise. "Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Christ, and for Christ."

Again, 2ndly ; As civil governments are constituted *by* Christ, so *are they* also constituted *for* Christ. This proposition results from the last : for if nations themselves are designed for Christ, as a necessary consequence, their bodies politic, and machinery of government, are so designed also. *As* this is an interesting light, in which, to view them, *so* it is an important one. For since civil government is an agency which Christ uses to accomplish his will, he that resists the administrators of it, resisteth an ordinance of Christ ; the officer being, by virtue of his office, "the minister of God, for good to him ;" or, as the apostle afterwards expresses himself, "God's minister, attending upon this very thing." Whatever is for the benefit of the Church, is for the glory of Christ—her head. "He that heareth you, (says he,) heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." There is no severing of these interests ; they are, essentially, one. What impartial man, then, can doubt whether the restraint put upon immorality, by which, under a strict and well-constituted magistracy, it is obliged to skulk in corners, and hide its odious head, and dares not stalk about at large, and in the open day, to offend the eye, and disgust the feelings, and lower the moral standard of a nation's virtue—that which constitutes its brightest ornament, its best safeguard, and its



highest glory.—I say, what impartial man can doubt whether such a power be for the Church's good. Then if it be for her well-being, it is for his honor, whose she is, and whom she serves,—or for the glory of Christ. The reason given in the book of Judges for the plunder of Micah's house, is, that at that time "there was *no magistrate* in the land, that might put the wicked to shame in any thing." Brethren, the great use of an efficient civil magistracy is, for Christ's sake, and for the sake of true religion, to put sin and wickedness to shame; and as far as it falls short of accomplishing this end, it falls short of fulfilling the great design of its institution. "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people:" and if it be *nationally persevered in*, will accomplish its ruin. O did legislators but mark this truth as they ought, and read it in the page of the world's history, as they might—written in letters of gloominess and blood;—*imagined* political advantages (for advantages purchased *at such a cost* are but phantoms,) would never be dealt out to us, *at the expense*, much less to the destruction of our moral and religious welfare!

But, further, 3dly; Individual members of the community, *as* they were created by Christ; *so* are they also designed, *for* Christ.

National and civil advantages only profit as they confer individual good. And so national and civil obligations can only be rendered, in return, by *individual acts* of obedience. If then you are an individual ruler, you are to use your civil authority

for Christ; and if you are but an ordinary subject of the realm, you are to obey the constituted authorities from a motive of regard, to Christ. This is to be the grand spring of your obedience, that it is owed to Christ; and its value is to be calculated by the consideration, that it is "for the Lord's sake." Whatever be the form of government under which we live, the obligation upon Christians remains the same—not to disturb it. The people of God are characterized, as "the quiet in the land." They that are worthy of the name of disciples of Christ, are not to be found where sedition and disaffection to kings and governments are concocted. Revolution against *lawful* authority, and *legitimate* rights, never grew out of true Christianity. And therefore, brethren, if you find persons of such principles putting forth claims to piety, be assured it is but the mask of religion they wear, and by it shield, and hide, the heart of impiety and unbelief. The Jewish Church was commanded to "seek the peace of the city, whither God had caused her to be carried *captive*, and to pray unto God for it, for that in its peace she should have peace." Then how much more earnestly should we seek the peace of, and pray for, the country, where *we are not held in captivity*, but enjoy so great a degree of liberty.

For improvement of this subject;

First,—In general—Let all learn to give true religion its due importance.

By the bold and unhallowed assertions we have of late been so accustomed to hear, there has been

much danger lest men should imagine that the acts of states and governments (or nations in their collective and representative capacity) have nothing to do with religion, and the promotion of scriptural truth. Whereas our text informs us, and I trust my arguments have proved, that civil government was expressly ordained for the furtherance of Christ's cause. "Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Christ, and for Christ."

"It has been observed by Philo Judæus, that God, with the intention of pointing out the necessary connexion between Church and State, placed the fifth commandment (called the crown commandment) near the middle of the decalogue, and in the confines of both tables, viz., those touching religion, which relate to God, and those touching justice, as belonging directly to men; that the governor, whoever he might be, by supporting, as it were, religion with one arm, and establishing justice with the other, might thereby become the firm upholder of both." Whether any such design was intended by the circumstance, I do not decide; but I may justly and reasonably ask, why Melchisedec, the grand type of Christ, should have been both "A KING AND A PRIEST of the most high God" at the same time; *but to teach us the scriptural* character of the union between Church and State in Messiah's kingdom? Or why was Moses the civil ruler of the Jewish Church, and Aaron the head of the Jewish state, associated by God in *the joint* government of his people, but to teach us the

same? Or why did Jehovah himself first establish the connexion of Church and State amongst his ancient people, if it be not the system *best calculated* to honour Him and bless His people? Can infinite wisdom err in the choice of *fit* means to save a lost world? Or has that which must have been morally good then, become, not only ill-timed, but even morally evil now? Do changing ages change also the nature of moral excellence, or alter the value of moral actions? Then, if not, can we be wrong in copying, as far as possible, the scheme of civil and ecclesiastical government which God himself has thus laid down? And, still further, why did the Saviour and his apostles *after his resurrection*, sanction, by their stated attendance at the synagogues, the established form of worship in Judea, but to teach us, in a way that speaks louder than that of precept, viz., *in the way of example*, that the connexion of Church and State is “not of man, but of God;” and that separation from a national and a true Church of Christ, (and such a Church none surely will deny the Church of England to be,) on the ground of the imperfection and abuse of its constitution and ordinances,—inasmuch as such separation divides its interests, weakens its efforts, mars its beauty, and strengthens its foes,—is (in this sense, at least,) schism and sinful? Brethren, if you judge the Church of England to be (what every thing connected with human agency must, in some measure, be) imperfect and corrupt; then pray for, and labour after, her renovation; but do not dissent from, and divide

her, and so contribute, as far as in you lies, to obstruct her usefulness, and paralyze her work of mercy and salvation! On such principles did not Christ act—so did not his apostles. Alas! that men should be so reckless of *the consequences of their actions*; and that the alleged ground of all the hostility displayed against our Apostolical Church, should be mere civil immunities, which in all probability would, if granted to the extent required, precipitate the spiritual decline of those who seek them, and bury our tried civil and religious bulwarks in the midst of one universal political and moral desolation.

Again, Secondly,—In particular—

1st, Let subjects learn the duty of allegiance to civil governors.

“They that resist, shall receive to themselves (saith St. Paul) damnation;” and for this reason; because such persons “resist the ordinance of God.” For, *as* rulers and magistrates are called by the name of Gods in scripture, *so*, as Nazianzen remarks,\* “they carry God’s image. Such as are in the highest authority, approximating, as it were, towards full length representations; those of a middle degree, to half length; and those in the lowest station of office, to representations of a smaller size:—but all, in some degree, carrying the image of God.” “Therefore, brethren, we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake.”

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\* I quote the sense, rather than the exact words.

And, 2ndly, Let civil rulers learn from this subject, their obligations and duty to Christ.

“Whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Christ, and for Christ.” Surely, brethren, this text must suggest to those invested with any civil office, the obligation they are under to use the influence they possess above others, for the countenance and support of Christ’s cause. Stations of honour are also stations of responsibility: and woe be to that magistrate who does not feel them to be so.

See an illustration of this truth in our Lord’s parable of the talents, as recorded in Matt. xxv. We there read of two faithful servants, who doubled the amount entrusted to them, and entered “into the joy of their Lord.” But we also read of a third—an “unprofitable servant,” who was condemned for his negligence. Now, what I wish you particularly to remark is, *the ground* of this latter person’s condemnation—*his slothfulness* in Christ’s cause. It was not for what he had done that he was punished, but for *what he had left undone—for what he did not when the opportunity of serving God was put within his reach*. “Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou *oughtest* to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall

be taken away, even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” And you, brethren, have, at least, one talent entrusted to you : Oh see that it be not buried, but used for the glory of Christ.

Should you go out of office without having made one effort in behalf of truth and piety ; it will be found on the day of final account that it would have been to your advantage to have refused such an opportunity of Christian usefulness ; rather than having accepted it, *not to have employed it for the service of your Maker*. It has been said of the temple of Jerusalem that many worked at the building, who never became living stones in the spiritual edifice which it typified. May you, brethren, be instrumental in building up the Church of Christ by your countenance and support ; and—through faith in the Saviour—living stones in the building. And were I to wish for you the dominion of an Alexander, and the riches of a Cræsus to spend upon it, and the wisdom of a Solomon to govern it, and the age of a Methuselah, in which you might enjoy it, I should wish for you a mere nothing, when compared with what I have already wished, viz., that you may be brought into *union* with Christ, by that spiritual instrument of divine relationship, *saving faith in the Redeemer*. Then, “being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone,” it will be a delightful part of *your experience*, here—

after, *to prove*, that, “whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : *as* all things were created by Christ ; *so* they were created *for* Christ.”

***FINIS.***





**TWO SERMONS,**

**PREACHED**

**BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,**

**IN MARCH AND APRIL,**

**1836.**



**THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH  
IN HER COMMUNION AND MINISTRY.**

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**BY THE**

**REV. ROBERT EDEN, M. A.**

**LATE FELLOW OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE.**

“There is one BODY and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of  
your calling;—One Lord; one FAITH.” Eph. iv. 3, 4

**LONDON:**

**JOHN HATCHARD & SON, 187, PICCADILLY;**

**AND**

**PARKER, OXFORD.**

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**1836.**

1874



# THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN HER COMMUNION.

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## SERMON I.

ACTS XI. 26.

And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

THE word of God, like the Spirit which is its author, is confined to no one mode of teaching. It instructs by doctrine, and by precept; and it teaches most powerfully by its recorded facts. The actions of holy men, under the old dispensation, and of Jesus and his apostles under the new, are the germ of principles which are to last for ever. Such, too, were those circumstances that befel the infant church, of which we read abundantly in the Acts of the Apostles. Like that class of evidence which arises from undesigned coincidence, the lessons that are learned from this source, have a freshness and strength that belong

not to any other; they are entwined with the history of living men, and therefore contain within them a seed of living truth. Such was the Christian name by which the disciples were called "first in Antioch." For, if it be true that "a Christian is the highest style of man," then it can be an inquiry of no slight interest to trace the history and significancy of that name. It is not with this name as with the ordinary titles of the world, which are unmeaning and vain; but it is a name of real honour, because it represents that which is really honourable; it is a title of true dignity, because the thing signified is of intrinsic excellence. And, as it is a name of no unmeaning import, so, too, is it one of no late original: if it adds to the dignity of an escutcheon that it make out its antiquity; if the title of yesterday be of a value comparatively mean, then is the Christian name, on this ground, also, a high and honourable name. Since this name was first known, many of the titles of earth have risen and have decayed. Created by man, as the fountain of their honourableness, they have had their origin in the caprice of his favour, and their extinction in accident; but the Christian pedigree has God incarnate for

its founder ; it has continued, in a series of unbroken descent for more than eighteen centuries of time ; and, we are assured, that that name shall remain among the posterities for evermore ; shall devolve upon every one of the sons of God, and heirs of immortality, to the end of time ; and shall be the mark of unutterable distinction, when “ the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; ”\* and when they, on “ whose foreheads it shall be found written,”† shall reign with him for ever and ever.

Since this name was first instituted, it has spread to a wide extent in different directions of the habitable world : and though there are dark and dismal corners of the earth, which still remain unvisited by the bright beams of the Sun of righteousness, and, where consequently, that name which “ is as ointment poured forth,”‡ has never yet shed its fragrance over their benighted inhabitants ; though millions of our fellow-immortals are yet Gentiles that know not Christ, or Mahometans who prefer an impostor ; yet, to a large section of mankind belongs the honour of that

\* Rev. xi. 15.

† Rev. xiv. 1.

‡ Cant. i. 3.



sacred name, which is the glory and hope of all the ends of the earth.

The appointment of this name to the early disciples at Antioch might supply many important considerations ; but, limiting our range, we shall look at it only in two large and leading points of view, *in its aspect upon the Church at large*, and, *upon the character of her component members* ; according to that view of our church in which she prays “ that all who profess and call themselves Christians, may hold the faith *in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace* ; as well as in *righteousness of life*.”

I. With respect to the former, it suggests, by its universality, that THE GENIUS OF THE RELIGION OF CHRIST IS OPPOSED TO PARTY DISTINCTIONS. There is a tendency in the mind of man to class himself under the ranks of party separation, in almost every subject which comes before his notice, and the nature of which allows of any difference of opinion ; and this tendency has ever shown itself, in a peculiar degree, in matters connected with religion. Religion, having respect to the invisible and the future, and being so closely mixed up with the most vital, because the eternal, interests

of man ; being a subject which, beyond any other, “ comes home to his business and his bosom ;” he clings tenaciously to those views which he has been led, either with, or without, sufficient reflection, to adopt concerning it ; is inclined to retire to the utmost distance from, nay, to hold in the light of enemies, all who are not like-minded with himself, in a matter which involves nothing less than right apprehensions of a futurity, in which he is personally and perilously interested. Hence, to the Jew, the name of Gentile was an abomination ; and, not less so, that of the Jew to the Gentile : hence the jealousies, and animosities, and feuds, which have never ceased to exist in the Christian church ; and hence, therefore, the beauty of that name, which had its rise in the simple and peaceable church at Antioch, where dissension had never entered, because there had been no recognition of “ Jew or Greek, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free ; but Christ was all and in all :” \* where, as the consequence of this simplicity, there was perfect unity ; and, they were “ all one in Christ

\* Col. iii. 11.

Jesus :” where was the dawning of the fulfilment of that glorious promise, “ The Lord shall be king over all the earth ; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.”\* It would have been happy for the church, if this had been the only name ever admitted to mark out those who follow the Redeemer in simplicity and in truth ; if they who confess “ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,”† had been able to preserve that one-ness of name also, which is no slight pledge of the “ unity of the Spirit” being preserved “ in the bond of peace.” ‡

This catholic form of religion is the only true form of Christianity ; and, in exact proportion as we depart from this expansive spirit, we depart from the simplicity of “ the truth as it is in Jesus.” This was the religion of the Apostles, who refused

\* Zech. xiv 9.

† Eph. iv. 5.

‡ “ From him every family in heaven and earth is denominated.” This affirmation must receive its completion, *first*, in the conversion of all tribes of men to the faith of Christ ; and then in the final and complete disappearance from the Church of those vilifying designations which at present signalize the common appellation, *Christian*, only to defame it, by calling up the recollection either of corruptions or of strife.”—*Saturday Evening*, by the author of “ Natural History of Enthusiasm,” page 486.

to know any thing of that sectarian spirit, which even in their days was springing up and distracting the minds of men, in that infancy of the Church, from Christ alone as the sun and centre of the religious system, whose bright rays should absorb into Himself all the shades of trifling controversy ; and, this was the state of mind to which they laboured to bring back those who had strayed from the simplicity of faith : and, need we add, that this is the only religion which any Christian, at the present day, ought himself to embrace, or to know any thing of in another ?

St. Paul knew full well the mischief and dishonour which would be inflicted upon the faith of Christ, when men should begin to wear the name of any of the ministers of Christ ; or pretend to take their distinctive title from the complexion of their opinions ; and, because he foresaw this, he took especial pains to crush the first risings of this spirit in the Churches he had planted, and, particularly, in the Church of Corinth, where it most prevailed. While they were saying, “ I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ,” he puts to them this pungent question, “ Is Christ divided ? Was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized into the name of

Paul?"\* Nay, so strongly did that Apostle feel the danger of the working of such a spirit, that he makes it an occasion of gratitude to God, that he had been restrained from even the administration of the rite of baptism, (which was an act that would have fallen within the exercise of his ministry,) lest he should thereby have given a seeming sanction to such a temper. How comes it to pass, that we are so little penetrated by the convictions that wrought so powerfully upon Paul; that we have so departed from the apostolic model, in the days in which we live? Whence is it that they who profess to be joined together in unity of object, and of hope; to be looking to one end, their souls' salvation, and relying upon one Redeemer, even Christ Jesus,—whence is it, that the aspirants after objects so elevated, and so elevating, should be disjoined from each other by considerations so minute as those which too often serve to keep them at a hostile distance from each other, and prevent those who hope to live together in heaven through eternity—who here love the same Lord, and have been washed in the same blood, and drink of the same river of the

\* 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

water of life, and have “access through the same Mediator, by the same Spirit, unto the Father,”\* from holding any intercourse with each other upon earth? There can be no doubt that the animosities of Christians give great success to the cause of Satan in the world: that arch-enemy of God and man knows that “if Satan be divided against himself his kingdom cannot stand;” † while he acts upon this knowledge to the confirmation of his own empire, he turns it against the empire of Christ; he longs to sow that same principle of disunion in the kingdom of Jesus, if, haply, he may effect its dissolution. When the powers of darkness are thus leagued together in dark confederacy “against the throne and monarchy of God,” we want the energies of all who bear true allegiance to the King of kings, to be rallied and concentrated against the common foe. When the struggle is “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,” ‡ we cannot spare the help of any true soldier of Jesus

\* Eph. ii. 18.

† Luke xi. 18.

‡ Eph. vi. 12.

Christ.\* When infidelity, avowed or disguised, or religious lukewarmness, or moral depravity, or that new-fashioned liberalism which, under the garb of universal toleration, would tolerate nothing but an universal compromise of principle; when either of these monsters is rearing on high his frightful and venomous head, it is no time for Christians to be occupied with internal quarrels, to be fighting with comparative shadows, to be exercising their skill in managing the weapons of civil dissension;—but, combining with the force of moral, and, therefore, impenetrable union; and, recognizing each other as members

\* “ Great is the folly of those who are united in essentials, and yet are perpetually disputing about minor points. They see that the world around them are lying in wickedness; that they neither receive God’s testimony concerning their own lost condition, nor concerning the divine gift of his Son. Unmoved by the fewness of those who believe in the word of life, many Christians are ready to make the number of believers still fewer, if they consent not to pronounce whatever shibboleth they may impose. They acknowledge that both they and their opponents hold in common all that is essential to salvation; but they will not allow others to rest in peace, till they believe exactly as much, or as little, as they themselves do; and yet, it is evident, they are taking the very measures that will make the breach between them still wider.”—Douglas’s “ *Errors regarding Religion*,” p. 307.

of one great body of which Christ is the head, and marshalled under their heavenly leader, to "go forth to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."\* We look forward with eager hope to that promised period, when Satan shall be beaten down under our feet; when "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,"† and Jesus shall reign, with universal sway, over the hearts of his intelligent and willing subjects: but of this glorious consummation we are, still, the expectants; and, be that period near or distant, it can never be brought about but by the harmonizing efforts of all good men against moral and spiritual evil; and, in order to this, by a postponement of those small or secondary considerations, which are lighter than air, when put in competition with the establishment of Christ upon his throne in the hearts of those multitudes, who, in a nominally Christian land, are practically disowning his authority. Where such a sacrifice as this is withheld, we must cease to wonder if they who "hate the light," and dread any

\* Judges v. 23.

† Rev. xi. 15.



approach to it, lest their deeds should be reprov'd, should resolve still to remain at their guilty distance; if the libertine and the scoffer should determine to hold off, with a quiet conscience, until the confusion of the Christian world be reduced to order; until it can be known that Christ has verily a church in the world, by the criterion which he himself has set up; "*that they all may be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*"\*

It is impossible to conceive of any motive more powerful to stir us up to the promotion of unity, than that suggested by this prayer of Christ, uttered in the last moments of his life; which is an implied prophecy, that the measure of unity should be the exact measure of the progress of his kingdom. The fact at which the infidel points the finger of his scorn, and within which he entrenches himself,—that the cause, which has so long existed, has so little advanced,†—while it

\* John xvii. 21.

† "While the Church was one, Christianity spread; or, should we not say, burst over the world, gathering myriads of converts from lands within, and far beyond, the limits of the Roman empire. When Christians became factious, when

fulfils the prediction of Christ, carries with it no small reproof to those of us who have, in this sense, retarded the conversion of the world. Without attempting to enter into detail in this matter, or to hazard an opinion as to any opportunities of promoting this unity, which may have been neglected by us in time past, or which we may, in the future, neglect; without hinting, even mentally, at any questions of past or possible debate; the principle, we cannot too strongly press—that no duty is more imperative, than that of striving to cement the body of Christ, that we may thereby hasten his kingdom. It is well when men are occupied in repairing and re-modelling the institutions of the Church; in removing every unsightly excrescence upon her surface, that every blemish may be removed, which would mar her fair beauty, and hinder her from becoming in the eyes of all “a glorious Church, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing:”\* but no

other names than the name of Christ were called upon them then the evangelical circle drew in apace; no more conquests were made, or they were conquests purely nominal.”—*Saturday Evening*, page 488.

\* Eph. v. 27.

such occupations, however laudable, can atone for our neglect of promoting interior unity; can make us otherwise than guilty before God, if we are not conscious, each day of our lives, of definite endeavours to repair the bond of unity where it is broken, and to strengthen it where it is entire: if we “give sleep to our eyes, or slumber to our eyelids, or suffer the temples of our head to take any rest,”\* before we have done something towards the great object of finding a resting-place for the ark of God.

II. But, the Christian name, as given to those early disciples, DEMANDS OF THE COMPONENT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH, THAT THEY HOLD THE FAITH, ALSO, IN RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE. For if, in a place so notoriously evil—in a city famous, principally, for her infamy—the followers of Jesus first gained the name of “Christians;” is it not plain, that they formed an illustrious contrast to those around them; that they compelled the title, because they wore, in large and palpable characters, the “image and superscription?”† There must have been a distin-

\* Psalm. cxxxii. 4, 5.

† Matth. xxii. 20.

guishing simplicity of purpose, a steadfastness of faith, and strictness of obedience, before they could have so signalized themselves in that corrupt city. And who, then, in remembering that pure communion, can look, without some painful distrust, at multitudes comprised within nominal Christendom? Who can contemplate the numbers which our Church, with a charitable comprehensiveness, embraces within her pale; and not be moved with fear, lest, in many instances, this outward fellowship may exist without personal communion with Christ? How many who would reprobate the errors of a Church that is pillowing her hopes upon some supposed indefeasible privileges, *as* a Church,—are leaning with confidence upon a foundation no less weak; either on the abstract excellence of the national worship, or resting in a religion purely mechanical, the result of education, or example, or expediency, or accident, or some equally insufficient cause? Entrenched within a goodly frame-work of religion, and giving their suffrage to a Church, which has been truly described as “pure in its doctrines, irreproachable in its order, beautiful in its

forms;”\* may not many delude themselves by the pleasing light which such circumstances shed around them; light, which is no more than the sparks of their own kindling;† which, while they make a dazzling glare, serve only to interrupt the solid and scriptural medium through which alone they can see where they really stand, and to darken their vision, when they would know what manner of men they are? Religion, vital piety;—this is a thing so peculiar, so personal, so sacred, that nothing external (however relatively good it may be) must ever be confounded with it. The kingdom of Christ is not a ceremonial thing; neither meats nor drinks, nor any thing outward, that we should say of any institutions, “Lo! here is Christ; or, lo! there: but the kingdom of God is *within you*,”‡ says the highest authority; an interior dominion set up in the soul, a deeply-laid principle of the heart.

From each of these points of view, in which we have contemplated the Christian name as it

\* Preface to Southey's Book of the Church.

† Isaiah l. 11.

‡ Luke xvii. 21.

was bestowed on the early disciples at Antioch, we derive, in its turn, an important principle of action.

I. If its *universality* shows that the genius of the religion of Christ is opposed to party distinctions, hence follows *the obligation of promoting, by every possible means, Christian unitedness*. They who “were called Christians first in Antioch,” walked together in the atmosphere of peace and love, and confessed one Master, even Jesus Christ. The pure and peaceful light of his Spirit shone forth in their hearts; and they knew no party and no sect, but of those who “loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity,”\* and presented their “bodies a living sacrifice”† to the service of their Redeemer. Just such is the form of Christianity, which each one of us is called upon to promote. And we shall promote it, if the ruling habit of our mind is, to *cherish the truth for its own sake*; an arduous lesson to learn, but one at which we must be incessantly labouring, and in which we ought to have made no small proficiency, before we can acquire any high rank in

\* Eph. vi. 24.

† Rom. xii. 1.

the school of Christ, or lead others by our teaching, to eminence therein. There is no discipline of ourselves so salutary, so indispensable, as that by which we examine the impulses that direct our favourite views, and lead us to our conclusions : that which is untrue of the human mind, in respect of its natural condition, that it comes into the world like a blank paper, must become true of it as the recipient of God's message : here all its knowledge must be passive. It was when Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet, when this was her posture, that the Lord pronounced his divine commendation of her ; and *our* attitude must be even the same, if we would take to ourselves the consolation that we are under divine teaching. How many of our present impressions might never have existed, and how great a body of light might have been introduced into our souls, had we always subjected ourselves to this discipline, none who have not constantly lived under it can possibly conjecture ; they who *have* lived under it can tell us, that it has contracted the limits of their fancied knowledge, and widened their charity, by enlarging their respect towards their Christian brethren. If all could give to the

Bible, in their own study of it, that which, in theory, they allow to it—the supreme authority; not first wishing to find in it their own opinions, and so, reading its pages through a discoloured medium; but wishing to have the rays of *truth* reflected back upon their minds—many might embrace the things they have hitherto despised; and all, having evidence from this spirit of submission to the authority of the Scripture, that they are under the teaching of the Spirit of God, would have herein a pledge that they shall eventually be led into “all truth.”

It will urge us to the promotion of this Christian unitedness to remember, that the true Church of God is a transcript of the nature of its Author, the essence of which we know is Unity; and that the fairest portion of his creation will be dishonoured, if it be not in harmony with his own nature. In order, therefore, that his Church may not be the most striking anomaly in his government, our most earnest efforts are to be directed to produce unity; but in proportion as we allow this point, and see its great importance, we must take good care that we do not set up any arbitrary notion, any unauthorized standard of



this unity. We may thus be fancying that we are casting into the sea the great Gospel-net, while, really, we are "sacrificing to our own net,"\* and calling upon all men to do the same. Like Nebuchadnezzar, we may derive complacency from the zeal with which we command all people, nations, and languages, to be one with us in our worship; while, like him, we may only be commanding prostration to some golden idol which *we* have set up. And this takes place, not only when there is a partial insisting upon some one truth, to the detriment of a large body of other truths resting on the same sanction, and revealed (without any hint of their inferiority) in the same record; but also, and most mischievously, when an undue dignity or unscriptural efficacy is assigned to some rite or institution even of divine appointment; when, again, matters of doubtful and precarious inference,† which have, for genera-

\* Habakkuk i. 16.

† "There are many persons who may be said rather to believe in an *ecclesiastical polity* than in the doctrines of the Bible. In such cases, the impression must be similar to that which is produced by political partizanship in the governments of this world; and there are some, whose faith extends to higher things, who yet attach too much weight to externals."—Erskine's "*Essay on Faith*," p. 113.

tions, divided the judgments of men equally wise and good, are lifted to the same rank with those truths which are written as with a sunbeam upon the page of God's oracle, which run beneath the revelation of the word of God in the whole length and breadth of its foundation, and upon the belief or rejection of which, everlasting ruin or everlasting life is made to depend. It can be no excuse for such a course, that there has been a tendency to error on the opposite side: defect is not remedied by excess; nor the equilibrium restored by casting the whole weight into the opposed scale; both have alike forsaken the medium; and only when they return to this, will they find the central point of truth; and this point can never be attained, where there is not an avowed distinction between the essentials of truth and its accessories; where means are mistaken for ends; that which is relatively good, for that which is absolutely so.

Christian unitedness can never be attained when, in our zeal to gain universal assent to that which we are assured is true, we insist upon it, not merely as true, and contained in the word of

God, but as of co-equal rank and obligation with that which is essential ; the effect in this case is, that we increase the evil which we designed to cure : men detect and expose the fallacy of our reasoning, and justify themselves in delaying to enter upon the Christian life until there is a general agreement,—at all events, a sounder argument—upon what constitutes the essence of Christian faith ; they will wound the Christian cause with a safe conscience, so long as her friends present her in a vulnerable form : a piece of new cloth is attached to an old garment, in the hope of producing a uniform appearance ; the materials are found to be incongruous, and the “ rent is made worse.” There is, indeed, an affectation of union, spurious in itself, and destructive in its effects, from which, therefore, we can never too loudly dissent, nor too openly withdraw ; we mean, the attempt to amalgamate, in one undistinguishing mass, essential truth and essential error ; the system which would regard with tokens of equal affection, those who are honouring Christ as the Redeemer, or robbing him of his proper glory ; they who abet such an attempt sully, as

the others steal away, the gems that give its lustre to the Redeemer's crown.\* From such an union whilst we keep ourselves, let us act upon the persuasion, that nothing is wanting among sincere believers in Jesus, but the principle of universal charity, to display the religion of Jesus in its native beauty ; this alone *can*, but this *will* recal the scattered fragments of the Christian body, and attract them to that common centre where all the rays of divine truth converge. This will secretly, but most certainly, divest the members of Christ's body of those peculiarities which disfigure the Church, and this will hasten the dominion which it is destined to hold. Let each, in his sphere of intercourse, labour to cut off the causes and the

\* There is no one of the current terms of the day, against whose mis-use in argument we should be more vigilant, than the word "liberality." It is a most seductive word, because it seems connected with enlargement of mind, and a freedom from contracted views of things. But, it has been so often claimed by those who, in their sentiments and acts "betray" Christ, that we cannot be too suspicious of its application. It is the candour which is found within the realms of truth, which is alone legitimate : that which stands on the confines of truth and error, and casts, alternately, a smile on each, is indifference, is treason.

roots of disunion, by making it a law to himself to cast into the shade all subordinate differences, and to fill the large space thus opened with the great fundamentals of catholic, primitive, saving truth. None may say that they have done their part towards bringing about this large and flourishing state of the Church, unless they have acted, to its fullest extent, upon the apostolic rule of walking together, as far as they are agreed;\* for they know not how each day would multiply the points of agreement. They would quickly find that he whom his brother compelled to go with him one mile, is anxious to go with him twain;

\* “Any view of subjects that may be believed or disbelieved, without affecting our faith in the atonement, which can produce a coldness, or unkindness between those who rest on the atonement, and live by the faith of it, must be a wrong view, because it mars that character of love which Christ declares to be the badge of his people. Such a view interferes with the doctrine of the atonement. Love to Christ, as the exclusive hope, and the compassionate all-sufficient friend of lost sinners, is the life-blood of the Christian family; and, wherever it flows, it carries along with it relationship to Christ, and a claim on the affection of those who call themselves his.—The importance of the blood of Christ is not rightly perceived, if it does not quench these petty animosities.”—Erskine’s “*Essay on Faith*,” p. 113—115.

say, much more, will say unto his brother, "I will not leave thee until we have reached the heavenly city."

2. From the other view of the Christian name, in its aspect upon the individual members of the Church, we see that *Christianity is a phantom, except as it is embodied in personal character*. For, who were they that "were called Christians first in Antioch?" The *disciples* of Jesus; men who were sitting at Jesus' feet, and following "the Lamb whithersoever he went;"\* men, who were so palpably enlisted in his service, as to be identified with himself, and so, to extort from those who witnessed them, the very name of Him whose they were, and whom they served. And the limitations of Christendom are, even now, the same: it is no division of visible territory, no kingdom cut out of space; but, wherever Christ's dominion is set up in the soul, there it lies; it is co-extensive with "the *holy* Church throughout all the world." We see, then, our calling, of what sort it is; and therefore, while we shun that spirit of disunion which would "rend the seam-

\* Rev. xiv. 4.

less robe of the Redeemer," we must remember that it is written, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:"\* that it is the prerogative of God to reach, with his glance, the first moving principles of action; and that, however *our* ears may be dinned with the strife of tongues, and *our* eyes confused with the endless varieties of human fancy, these things perplex not the vision, nor impede the judgment of "Him, with whom we have to do." He who has appointed a day, as yet in the distance, as "that day when he shall make up his jewels,"† knows even now which are his, and which are only the sparkling counterfeit. He, who has forbidden his zealous, but indiscreet servants, to attempt to separate the wheat from the tares in the field of this world—(leaving, herein, the model of the earthly Church to the end of time)—He now sees which shall be gathered "into bundles to be burned, and which gathered into his barn."‡ Disclaiming any knowledge of the systems of man's invention, we must not hide from ourselves, that there is a communion which we are pledged to join—

\* Rom. viii. 9.

† Malachi iii. 17.

‡ Matthew xiii. 30.

the party of those who are recusants and separatists from the spirit of a world that “lieth in wickedness;”\* and who, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, are “holding forth the word of life, by shining as lights in the world.”† The workings of a deceitful heart are in nothing more to be watched than when they would lead us, under the plea of discountenancing party, to stand aloof from those to whose spiritual elevation we have not yet risen; whose devotedness we have not the heart to imitate; and whose minority promises no distinction: who, if they are chargeable in some particulars of their conduct with that which savours of party, exhibit only one of the many errors which are the alloy of all human excellence, and oftentimes but specks upon a “body which is full of light.” The party which we must *not* decline to join, is composed of St. Paul, and St. Peter, and St. John, and “as many as are like minded,” wherever they may be found:—of Paul, who “counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord:”‡—of Peter, who

\* 1 John v. 19.      † Philipp. ii. 15, 16.      ‡ Philipp. iii. 8.



was even consumed with zeal for the honour of his Master, and could appeal to him without fear of contradiction, "thou knowest that I love thee:"\* —of John, who said "love not the world; neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."† And if (when our heart has acquitted us of consciously aiding the spirit of division) to be associated with this holy band, shall entail upon us aught of discredit, in *such* shame we may, we must glory; resolved, if this be vileness, to "be yet more vile;" and, as the secret to enable us to do this, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured *the Cross*, despising the shame; and is now (as the reward) set down on the right hand of the throne of God."‡

\* John xxi. 17.

† 1 John ii. 15.

‡ Heb. xii. 2.

# THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IN HER MINISTRY.

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## SERMON II.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 9.

We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

As the church of God dwells in "unity of spirit," so is she characterized by unity of faith : as she is one in her COMMUNION, so, also, is she one in her TRUTH.

To hold this truth as God hath taught it, and to transmit it without mutilation or alloy, to those that come after, is the office with which, in her successive generations, she is put in trust. But, while the Church, at large, is thus the hereditary keeper of Holy writ, she commits to a special order of men, the business of dispensing the treasure which is in her custody, of "rightly dividing

the word of truth.”\* This order are, therefore, termed her ministers; their appropriate duty being, to “serve,” first, “the Lord Christ;” and, next, to be the servants of their fellow-men, for Jesus’ sake. In the discharge of this office, they have, so to take heed unto the doctrine, that they “keep back nothing that is profitable;” † but, *as* they have received the gift,—in all the compass of the truth as it is in Jesus,—to minister the same; not as fraudulent and partial, but, “as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” ‡ But, while it is required in the stewards of divine things, that they be thus “found faithful” in declaring the whole counsel of God, § (the complex of truth being alone “the truth,”) there are yet certain principles, which are not so much the foundation as the centre of all other truths; in which they all meet; by which they are closely bound together; and from which, as from the great centre of natural life, the heart, flows out every energy of vitality, and of health. In keeping close to these first principles, and in seeing

\* 2 Tim. ii. 15.

† Acts, xx. 20.

‡ 1 Pet. iv. 10.

§ Acts, xx, 27.

that they pervade and inform the whole system of their teaching, the ministers of religion will alone effectually provide for that one-ness of the church which is at once her beauty, and her defence. Now, in seeking for this one truth, which is the key-stone of the spiritual edifice, we are not left to any doubtful conclusions as to what it may be ; but, are met, at all points of the writings of the Apostles, with the announcement of it, in terms so simple and decisive, that the most ignorant cannot misunderstand, nor the most confused mind misinterpret them. “ We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake,” is a statement, which determines, once for all, *the absorbing subject of ministerial teaching ; and, the position, relatively to the church, of Christian ministers.*

There was in the Apostle’s mind, at the time when he made the avowal contained in these words, a suspicion that other motives might, possibly, be influencing some, in his day, who seemed to be preaching “ Christ Jesus the Lord :” it is to be supposed, that he was here significantly glancing at those teachers, who had

crept into the churches of his planting, and depraved the simplicity of the "faith once delivered unto the saints."\* These men were seeking to accomplish some unworthy ends, and were therefore justly accused of "preaching themselves." But, the temptation to do this has survived the days when Paul wrote ; and it is needful, therefore, before considering the course which that Apostle followed as the rule of his ministry, to bestow a look, as we pass, at that course which he reprobated, and shunned. There were none at that time, (as it is probable there are none now,) who literally preached themselves, who were so grossly impious as to set up themselves, in their own persons, as the objects of worship and of faith ; but, self was so mixed up with what they said and did, that they laid themselves open to this serious charge. And it is a charge which lies against all who now seek, through the exercise of their ministry, to compass any ends besides the discharge of that ministry itself. There may be *express* aims of this nature, when any who are engaged in the sacred calling,

\* Jude, 3.

endeavour either to promote their own sordid interest and advancement; to “get on in the world,” through channels of preferment, which are opened by any alliances they may form, as growing out of their public position; or, to propagate their fame through the notoriety they may acquire as expositors of God’s word. The seekers of their interest and their fame may both do this, consistently with a setting forth the pure word of God: there may be no adulteration of the matter of their ministry; but the motives of it are vitiated; and, so, they preach themselves. Or, the same fault may be committed—less consciously, indeed, but not less culpably—by those, who have allowed their own notions to blend with, and to give a colouring to, their exhibition of divine truth. It is quite conceivable that this may take place where there is no wilful introduction of strange fire to the sacred altar; no previous deliberate intention to “corrupt the word of God;” \* but, where a false, or, even a true philosophy may have intruded itself into that ground, which, “the wisdom that is from above” † should alone occupy. They who have thus mixed up

\* 2 Cor. ii. 17.

† James, iii. 15.

any portion of the systems of man's device with the revelation of God ; and in so doing, if they have not caused "the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," have disquieted and alarmed the friends of truth,—though they may escape the stings of conscience which belong to those who maliciously poison "the wells of salvation," yet, must they be held responsible for the steps, however imperceptible, by which they have arrived at this state of mind, the results of which, when promulgated, are discovered to be pernicious to the interests of religion ; and the bitter fruits of which they have not seen, only because they have been checked in the bud, by interpreters of God's word, more vigilant and scrupulous than themselves.\*

The religion of Jesus Christ is not one of the many schemes which man's ingenuity has proposed to the consideration of the world, and which each individual, according to his verdict, may adopt or refuse ; but it is the final, authoritative, oracle of God. Its form, too, is no less certainly divine

\* "The student in divinity may learn from the errors of the modern German theology, that if he assumes any arbitrary theory for the interpretation of Scripture,—no extent, and no depth of learning will save him from falling into the wildest error."—Rev. H. J. Rose's "*Protestantism in Germany*," p. 102.

than its substance; being that, which the Divine Spirit, to whom all the infinite forms of language were open and at command, appointed as the fittest vehicle for the communication of his will. Principles only, exist in the Supreme mind; by imparting these principles, he transforms the mind of man into his own moral image; for these principles, therefore, and nothing else, can we look in the varied revelations of God's word; and every principle, we know, is not multiform, but one. The truths, therefore, that have been cast into that mould of inspired phraseology in which we find them in the Bible, must be held to be definite, and capable of being correctly received, in but one way.\* The various religions which the world has seen from the beginning of time have been, only, so many suggestions of human ingenuity; each offering itself, in its turn, as a candidate for approbation; to remain, if countenanced; to retire, if rejected: but, Christianity has fixed

\* The error of the Neologian system is wholly founded on a wrong notion of the *relative language* of Scripture. God has seen fit to convey his truth to our understandings through relations of things with which we are familiar; but, the truth so conveyed is simple and express. God has spoken to us *relatively*, but we are to interpret him *absolutely*.



herself within a peculiar inclosure, where she "sits a Queen;" by none controlled, but controlling all; uttering a language that is plain and decisive; and when she so speaks, speaking Truth.

If, then, it should happen, through our long devotion to the study of scholastic philosophy, that our minds have become imbued with that spirit of uncertainty which marked those speculations; if, by contemplating the ten thousand theories which floated on their systems, and, all of which were left equally undetermined—we should have contracted a habit of mind, which brings Christ's truth to the tribunal of such loose principles; we shall be brought within close confines of the danger of preaching ourselves—not only to the disparaging, but the dethronement of "Christ Jesus the Lord."

I. When the Apostle here sets forth the ABSORBING SUBJECT OF MINISTERIAL TEACHING, he announces that which was the rule of his own ministry, and which all his successors allow should be the rule of theirs. And, it is probable, that no minister of Christ was ever yet found, however opposite his teaching might be to that of

any other of his brethren, who did not claim to be, in the sense in which St. Paul was—a preacher of “Christ Jesus the Lord.” And, undoubtedly, if the Apostle intended nothing more by this language, than that he was the teacher of a system which had to do, generally, with the history of Jesus Christ ; then, as the circle of such teaching would be of the very widest extent, it would follow, that all who should, in their ministrations, deal with truths *connected* with Christianity, in any part of its wide circumference, would be imitators of the Apostle. But, we can in no other way learn the meaning of his rule, than through his recorded practice. And, no one who thoroughly examines this, as it may be seen in the book of his living, personal ministry—the Acts of the Apostles ; or, as he inculcates it in the form of doctrine in those epistles which he gave to the churches he had planted, as well as to the pastors who were to feed them, can fail to perceive that his preaching of Christ, was something more definite and express, than that general handling of the topics of the Christian faith. With Paul the preacher, “Christ was All :” not only the *subject-matter*, but, the single *subject* ; each, and all of the truths

he laid down, like rays of heavenly light, emanating from, and converging upon, that one glorious and Divine Person. And, it is to this point, especially, that we should have regard; on this fix our attentive view—if we would comprehend the meaning, and catch, for our own imitation, the spirit of St. Paul's assertion, that he preached "Christ Jesus the Lord." It was not an Idea, a notion, a proposition, or even a doctrine (though copious streams of doctrine flowed therefrom) that he primarily preached, but the Word made flesh, and dwelling among men. It was one who had "gone in and out amongst them," whom they had heard, and "seen with their eyes, whom they had looked upon, and their hands had handled,"\* that this Apostle preached; a living Being, an incarnate God. And, it is this exhibition of the *Person* of Christ,† which, from the Apostles' age

\* 1 John, i. 1.

† "A knowledge of Christ's person is doubtless necessary to the knowledge of all the other parts of the Gospel. But this concession gives no sanction to that system of faith which so exclusively exalts the person of Christ, as if all evangelical truths must be learned more by pious and abstract meditations upon his person, than from the clear records of the Gospel. Is not this a mystic sort of divinity?"—Lloyd's "*Preaching of Christ*."

to the present has been the foundation of all effective preaching of Him. Upon this foundation indeed will be reared the whole edifice of truth : upon this platform will be constructed, an orderly and complete system of evangelical divinity ; but, “ other *foundation* can no man lay than that is laid which is Christ Jesus ; ” \* “ the Lord from heaven ; ” † “ Christ Jesus the Lord.” When this is habitually done—when the ministrations of religion find their centre, and rallying point, in the reality of Christ’s Person, then, all the great doctrines of our faith are intelligently received ; because they are seen, not as abstract propositions, but as lively principles ; as the consequences of that work of Christ, which he wrought out for our sake. Of the ministry which is grounded on this reference of all things to the Person of Christ, his proper Deity will of course be the basis ; for, it is the single ground of the glory of that Person. His infinite perfections as “ God, over all, blessed for ever ” ‡—equal to the Father, and one with him, are the features which give to the dispensation of the Gospel, its unique, its distinguishing excellency. This corner-stone

\* 1 Cor. iii. 11.

† 1 Cor. xv. 47.

‡ Rom. ix. 5.

of the future building being firmly set, the whole will rise in grandeur and in strength ; this being unsettled, its solidity and coherence is, at once, destroyed. No labour, therefore, can be deemed superfluous, which is employed in demonstrating this great truth : to impress and reiterate its evidences, will be, to make sure work in all subsequent teaching ; for, here it is that a germinant scepticism, a covert unbelief, first manifests itself. It is here that under the semblance of an expansive philosophy, infidelity creeps beneath the foundations of our faith ; and having corroded the substance on which it stood, leaves us to perish under its ruins. It is here that Rationalism,\* (libellously calling itself Reason,) first plants its foot ; and here, therefore, must we repel its entrance : detecting for ourselves, and exposing to the world, the shallowness of its pretensions ; shewing that the Reason which leads men to confess their natural ignorance upon all other subjects, should pre-eminently, so act in this ; and

\* " Rational theology is in every respect untenable ; it has no definite form, and it rests on no foundation ; the reason which it appeals to is a counterfeit. It is merely ignorance and presumption, under the disguise of reason."—Douglas's "*Errors regarding Religion*," p. 194.

that the finite, in receiving the communications of the infinite mind, has reached its limits, when it has listened to the divine voice, and understood the sense of that which Prophets and Apostles have affirmed. Its usurpation of a name derived from "Reason" must not beguile us; because it adopts this name, only to hide from itself its full deformity, its unwillingness to allow those principles, which once granted, would compel it to admit the consequences which it hates.\* Here the minute arguments of verbal sophistry must be defied, as well by the influx of separate testimonies from all parts of the Bible, as from the structure of the scheme of salvation. Not Christ as Divine—in some mitigated sense which all can receive—as possessing a secondary and derivative Divinity; but Christ as absolute God; in whom the Divine attributes, though veiled in the flesh, are not limited, but exist in the fulness of their perfection; at once the image of the invisible God, and the model of unfallen man,—is to be

\* "The use of reason in religion and philosophy is the same. As without facts we can gain no knowledge of nature, so without inspired truths, which are God's statement of facts, either future or invisible, we can make no discoveries in religion."—Douglas's "*Errors regarding Religion*," p. 176.

preached, as a truth essential to the Gospel scheme, and with which it is so interwoven, that, if it be touched, the whole edifice must crumble into dust. For this alone is the basis of the Atonement; to which,—when the “exceeding sinfulness of sin”\* has been discovered to the conscience,—the Deity of Christ, at once conducts. When the mind has arrived, at the Atonement, through this avenue of conviction of sin, there will be no danger of a false view of that great verity of our faith. None will then imagine that the Atonement is a mere drama enacted by God, to restore to man that self-complacency which sin has disturbed within his breast; whilst God has never been his enemy; has no attribute of justice to be appeased; has been his friend and continues such still, however sinful he may have been and may remain; but, (the character of God being unchangeably holy,) that man’s iniquities have “separated between” him and his God; † that an example of his own holiness must precede the example of his mercy; that, by being just alone could he be “the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” ‡ To teach

\* Rom. vii. 13.

† Is. lix. 2.

‡ Rom. iii. 26.

that this reconciliation is, on the part of God, complete ; and that no ideas of freeness can equal the freeness with which man is invited to be reconciled to God ; that this offer is not only unclogged with conditions, but that its essence is, that it abolishes all conditions ; this,—while it will display the effulgent glory of the cross of Christ,—by a law of divine attraction, will kindle a returning love to God ; and will thus evidence that the faith which justifies through the merit of Christ's blood, is intimately and certainly linked with that which sanctifies by his Spirit. And, so, in exhibiting the Gospel, we shall find ourselves “ preaching Christ Jesus the Lord ; ” we shall fulfil the test before laid down, of glorifying his Person, not by any mystic abstractions of mind in contemplating that Person apart from the revelations of Him in the scriptures, but by understanding the grace of Christ in his gift of himself for us ; the pardon of sin through his blood, our union with him, and the consequent communications of his grace for the edification of his members.

In like manner the privileges and prospects of the church will centre in Christ : the holy Catho-



lic church is "his body:" the communion of saints "is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:"\* the remission of sins is "preached among all nations in his name;"† the resurrection of the body, is the work of the Son whose voice "all that are in the graves, shall hear and shall come forth:"‡ the earnest of the life everlasting is "Christ in us the hope of glory."||

The promises of God have their stability in him ; being "in him yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us;"§ His threatenings are executed by Christ upon "them that know not God;"¶ while "to them that are in Christ Jesus" they bring "no condemnation."\*\*

The ordinances of religion have their significance from him ; for, we are "buried with Christ in baptism;"†† and, in the Eucharist, it is "the Lord's death,"‡‡ that we shew.

And, the morals of the Gospel, apostolically taught, will equally be "the preaching of Christ Jesus the Lord." Duties civil, relative, and personal, if handled by us as by Paul, will not be rigid

\* 1 John i. 3.

† Luke xxiv. 47.

‡ John v. 28.

|| Col. i. 27.

§ 2 Cor. i. 20.

¶ 2 Thess. i. 8.

\*\* Rom. viii. 1.

†† Rom. vi. 4.

‡‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

precepts and isolated laws, but animated principles, because grafted upon Christ, the living vine, receiving nourishment from him, and reflecting, by their vigorous operation, the power of that grace which impels to an unconstrained obedience to his will; and thus in the display of doctrine and the enforcement of obligation, “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” will be resplendent “in the face of Jesus Christ.”\* By no constraint, but necessarily and naturally, in all our ministrations Christ will be seen riding forth “conquering, and to conquer;”† and, like as he is destined, ultimately to subdue the whole of his creation to his empire, so will he appear in the ministry of those whom he employs as agents to hasten that triumph, subordinating all the departments of his truth to the glory of himself. The life’s blood that streams from the cross will thus circulate through the spiritual system; and return to the fountain whence it set out: the light that irradiates the Redeemer’s head, will thus shoot its rays around, and encompass

\* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

† Rev. vi. 2.

the whole body of his truth ; and carry back the eye to the glory whence it issued.\*

And this view of the subject of all religious teaching, as being the teaching of independent truth,—of truth which is definite, complete, and, in this form, deposited in the church, leads us to anticipate, from the very nature of the case,

II. THE POSITION, RELATIVELY TO THE CHURCH, OF THE TEACHERS OF THAT TRUTH ; “ they are her servants, for Jesus’ sake.” They have not to excogitate, either wholly or in part, the things they are to teach : these are dictated and prescribed to them ; and they may not add thereto, nor diminish aught therefrom. An hand has been sent unto them ; and a roll of a book is therein ; and “ they are to read in the roll which has been written from God’s mouth, “ *the words of the Lord* :†” they are the channels whereby the

\* “ When Christ is habitually and conspicuously elevated, as the sun of the religious system, and all the graces and qualities which constitute religion are made to emanate from him, and to revolve around him, then there will be light ; while darkness will prevail, in a greater or less degree, in proportion as that sun is hid behind a cloud.”—Bishop of Chester’s (J. Sumner) “ Primary Charge.” † Jer. xxxvi. 6.

water of salvation is to flow out from the reservoir which God hath filled ; the teachers of truth which they themselves have first been taught. That this view of the office exhibits its essential character, the very word which designates it implies : for what is it but “ a *ministry* ? ” It was not in any place of dignity, as men count dignity ; nor of emolument, nor of power ; it was neither in holding a post of lucre, nor of lordliness, that Paul found his complacency, but, in “ testifying the Gospel of the grace of God ; ” \* in becoming the “ servant ” of all ; in being “ an ambassador for Christ ; ” but, if needs be, “ an ambassador in bonds ; ” † in realizing that view of the office which the Church (taking Paul’s sentiments as the rule of her own) has set forth to her ministers, when she reminds them that herein consists the high dignity to which they are called ; viz. that they are “ messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the *Lord* ; to teach and to premonish ; to feed and provide for the *Lord’s* family ; to seek for *Christ’s* sheep, that they may be saved through *Christ* for ever.” ‡

\* Acts xx. 24.

† Eph. vi. 20.

‡ Ordination Service.

It is this view of the pastoral calling, which we must embrace, if we would properly adjust our relation to that work. What the Scriptures did not sanction, it were unlawful to adopt; but, that which they both sanction and insist upon, we may not neglect: and in such a light, almost exclusively, do they hold forth the sacred function. It confers a dignity, indeed; and, especially where it is well discharged: "counting worthy of double honour, those that labour in the word and doctrine:"\* it wears an authority; and, though any should "boast of their authority, which the Lord hath given them for edification, and not for destruction, they need not be ashamed;"† but both the dignity and the authority consist in the "service:" when seen, therefore, as only reflected from this—so far from nourishing a spirit of vanity, or any notions of personal consequence, they tend directly to the opposite result, by keeping the eye on that primary idea of a "service," from whence they spring. This service, indeed, has a two-fold aspect; looking, on the one side, to Christ; on the other, to men; but, this latter view is both second and subordinate to the first;

\* 1 Tim. v. 17.

† 2 Cor. x. 8.

a principle of the very last importance to be recognized and acted upon, if we would not betray our duty to Him who hath "put us in trust with the Gospel."\* It is one of the first requirements of a church, by her ministers, that they shall be placed beyond the temptation of betraying this trust ; and it is a proof of the purity of our own church that she has amply provided for this point. By making the commission of her *teachers*, and the provisions for their support, to be both equally independent of the *taught*, she has rescued her ministers from the deleterious influence of either hope or fear : she has pursued a course founded upon her reverence for the uncorrupted word of God ; her acquaintance with the tendency to be corrupted, which is in the heart of man ; and her experience of the mischievous workings of an opposite system : so that not the use only, but the perpetual necessity of an established religion, might be considered as proved, if only by this argument.

With this standing protection, however, against the abuse of the view of sacred calling, as a

\* 1 Thess. ii. 4.

“service,” the view itself cannot be too constantly maintained, as being in its origin scriptural, and in its influence on ourselves, most salutary. While it frowns sternly upon the inflated pretensions of the Romish hierarchy, and, especially on that “man of sin,” who with a proud humility, subscribes himself “servant of the servants of God ;” it rebukes all those, who, in a church that denounces the arrogance of Rome’s ministers, are yet partakers, in a large degree, of their spirit : it checks that love of empire, which being natural to man, is often found strongly working in the hearts of those who ought most to shun its influence : it forbids all priestly airs arising from our being stewards of God’s mysteries ; and all “great swelling words of vanity,” about ourselves, as the only legitimate dispensers of divine ordinances. It is not a blind reverence for a consecrated order of men ; not any precedent to the clergy to entrench themselves within an awful enclosure, or to surround their heads with a mystic radiance, that Paul inculcates, when he describes himself as the “servant of all ;”<sup>\*</sup> but

\* 1 Cor. ix. 19.

a desire that “ the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God, by the treasure being kept in earthen vessels ; ” \* that the preciousness of the pearl may be set off by the meanness of the shell in which it is found ; that the glory of the ministerial work may be illustrated by the contemptibleness of the instruments whereby it is effected ; that the circumstantialia of the ministry may be swallowed up and lost in the ends of that ministry, which is none other than “ the profit of many, that they may be saved. ” †

To preserve the “ unity of truth ” we asserted to be the secret of security to the Church :—in order that we may resolve to carry out the principles of unity that have been laid down, we must feel a conviction that they rest on a sound foundation. And,

1. That the view of Christ Jesus, as the absorbing subject of the Christian ministry, *is not the refuge of a meagre theology, nor of a poor and barren mind.* On the contrary, it is the conclusion of an enlarged and enlightened mind, which, having made its survey of the field of divine

\* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† 1 Cor. x. 33.



truth from some elevated point, having encompassed it on every side, and so taken in the length and breadth of its revelations, has seen that Christ is the "Alpha and Omega"\* of all the dispensations, the centre of all the purposes of God ; that to him patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, as with an index, point ; and, that to his empire all things in heaven and earth are destined to submit. It is, therefore, not deterred from this uniform testimony to Christ from any fear of cramping the range of its theology, but assures itself of the very widest scope, while it treads in the steps of an Apostle who determined to act by that rule.

And, tried by its effects, this course will be fully justified : this alone has been found to transform and mould the man into that character, to produce which is the single end of all religion ; and which, however diversified in individual appearance, bears in all cases the true marks of resemblance to the one moral image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. To regard our vocation as essentially " a service," is *not the result of a mean view of our office*. It is not the resort of a pitiful mind of

\* Rev. i. 8.

an inferior order, knowing that it has no personal dignity to support the character of the office ; but the necessary consequence of the rank which it assigns to Christ, as the end of all teaching. There is no danger of our order losing caste, by adopting the title in which Paul gloried. None will be brought to "obey the Gospel of God" by the force of long antecedent statements of the claims of our commission. They "seek a proof of Christ speaking in us,"\* in the "word of Christ dwelling richly"† in our ministry : this proof afforded, the claims of our apostolical commission will find a hearing. To seek obedience to our authority by any other way, is an attempt as hopeless as it is unlawful : it is an attempt to smother the spiritual sense, and to imprison reason ; which, while it is forbidden to sit in judgment on God's oracular truth, must ever exercise itself in independent judgment upon the efficiency of the human expositors of that truth. The honour we extort will neither satisfy nor live : in an enlightened preaching of Christ will be found the permanent, because the moral, dig-

\* 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

† Col. 16.

nity of the priesthood. If this be wanting—activity, and earnestness, and zeal, will be a goodly, but profitless, machinery; if this be found—our credentials will carry on them the broad seal that “God is in us of a truth.”

THE END.





A  
**S E R M O N,**

**PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL, AT LAMBETH PALACE,**

**ON SUNDAY, JULY III, MDCCCXXXVI,**

**AT THE**

**CONSECRATION**

**OF THE**

**RIGHT REV. SAMUEL BUTLER, D.D.**

**LORD BISHOP OF LICHFIELD AND COVENTRY.**

---

**BY**

**R. W. EVANS, M.A.**

**FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS LORDSHIP.**

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A

## SERMON,

&c.

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DEUT. xxxi. 23.

“ And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage : for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them : and I will be with thee.”

THERE are critical moments in the course of God's Church, at which the reflecting student of its eventful history is induced to pause, breathing places in its irresistible and rapid career which he gladly seizes for the opportunity of a more leisurely survey of the region through which he has been carried. The stillness of the surrounding scene enables him to cast long and searching glances both behind and before, while it administers to the spirit that calmness which best befits so important an enquiry. He sums up in his mind the varied detail through which he hath past, and



proposes himself to encounter, with a deeper knowledge and more lively interest, that which is still to come. Such a moment is that in which we arrive at the passage now quoted from Scripture. The ministry of Moses is at its conclusion; and his successor is appointed and ordained. A new order of events commences: the bondage of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, the wanderings, the murmurings, and the chastisements of the wilderness, are now the events of bygone days; and we are introduced to the people of God, standing ready equipped for his service upon the verge of the promised land, under a leader specially appointed to guide and settle them in its possession. Long must the faithful Jewish reader have paused at this point of the fortunes of his Church and nation; and taking it for his station, surveyed the far-extended regions of retrospect and prospect. With the charge given to Joshua, sounding like a trumpet in his ears, and inspiring courageous faith in his bosom, with the land of promise around him in all its blissfulness, assuring him both of the fruits of that courage, and of the truth of God's sworn word, he experienced a happiness of spiritual contemplation which filled to overflowing his capacity of enjoyment. Joshua had been succeeded by a line of kings ruling that country to which he had conducted the people—Eleazar had been followed by a succession of priests, who ministered before the Lord in a sta-

tionary temple, and, seen in dim perspective, at the termination of each of these long converging rows of ordained ministers, the great King and Priest exhibited himself to the mind which was meek and wise enough to accept the prophets as the interpreters of the law, and to cling to the spirit rather than to the letter. At every new succession of king or high-priest, surely one faithful heart, at least, would recur to this remarkable passage,—would admit its long train of awakening thoughts, and hence gird himself anew with the belt of truth, for the struggle against the world around him.

What, then, shall be the comment of the Christian on such a text,—what, especially at the moment when, Jesus having been given for Joshua, the Gospel of Christ for the law of Moses, a spiritual country for a land of carnal possession, he shall happen to behold, as we do now, the accession of a new shepherd to Christ's flock, and the adaptation of a new link to that golden chain of succession which stretches from Him who has come to Him who shall come again? Both retrospect and prospect are long and dazzling; and at either extremity our sight reposes not here on one who is frail as ourselves, like Moses; and there on one whom we rather hope for than know, like the Messiah of the Jews,—not on gross type and impalpable antitype, but on a Divine Being, who has appeared in humiliation to reappear in

glory ; and who has filled up the interval between these two awful visitations with the ministration of men with whom He has promised to co-operate until the end of the world. It is here, upon this last point namely, that we will for the present fix our thoughts, and tie ourselves down amid the boundless space presented to the enlargement of our heart, to the goings forth of our imagination, and to the comprehension of our understanding.

The ordination of Joshua was at the express command of God ; and Moses was especially charged by God, when He addressed him in those words of comfortable exhortation. There, therefore, immediately occurs, in the first place, to us on the present occasion, the question as to what warrant there may be for the work now before us, and what commission our Church may have if, in effect, she charge her ministers in God's name, and bid them be strong and of a good courage, for that they shall bring the children of Israel into the land which God hath sworn unto them, and that the Lord will be with them. It is not intended, of course, to enter into the general question. It will be quite sufficient to state briefly so much as regards the application of this part of the text, and especially concerns us as members of our particular portion of Christ's Church.

It may confidently be asserted, that there is not, and never was, a member of our communion duly qualified to appreciate it, who does not feel

that he has been brought into the land which the Lord had sworn unto his fathers, into the spiritual land of his Church, and that the Lord is with it. An explanation, therefore, of the feelings of this man will lead us through all the points that are necessary to the question.

The qualifications which we suppose in this person are, first, a knowledge commensurate with a subject which is not one of the present moment, as it seems too often to be thought, but of past ages, which have fashioned our present and that of all future generations to the end of the world; and, secondly, a charity commensurate with a well-founded faith.

With respect to the first, a book one thousand eight hundred years old has been put into his hands; sacraments, of the same date, are exhibited to him; ministers, both of that word and those sacraments, are waiting upon his spiritual wants. He traces all these ordinances up through the long succession of ages, and arrives at a generation of men who pledge to us, even on the testimony of their blood, that they received that word, with those sacraments which it enjoins, from the hands of the Apostles themselves; and he finds the same men professing that they had received also an episcopal commission, which they had to transfer to successors, as essential to the unity of the Church; and which they did so carefully transfer, that for one thousand five hundred

years its ministry prevailed in unbroken succession through every quarter of Christendom. He rationally desires to find this ministry before his eyes at this day, and he finds it in his own communion, ministering to God's unmixed word, to his lawful sacraments, and to the sound doctrine consequent upon such pure service. With joyful satisfaction he acknowledges that the pastors of his Church have a commission distinctly as Joshua's derived from God ; and although not through only one intermediate agent, as was his, but through a long line of successive priesthood, yet that the very length of the interval, by carrying his eye over a longer display of the watchful care of the great Bishop of our souls over His Church, only serves to confirm his confidence in an institution which has come down to him uninjured through the wrecks of empires and the revolutions of ages.

On the second point it may be remarked that one great effect of knowledge is to increase our charity. For it not only acquaints us more fully with human infirmity, but also gives it more frequent and stronger exercise by presenting to it a greater number and variety of objects. Thus ages past, yea, and even ages unborn, partake of its friendly consideration. Possessed with such a spirit, this man regards with reverence and love the characters of the primitive Church ; he desires to feel to the utmost that he is one with them, he cannot

endure to think himself embarked in a separate vessel from them ; he deprecates therefore the severing of a principal link through which he can attach himself to them as forefathers. And looking on through ages to come after him, he sees not how one spirit of peace and love can ever pervade the whole Church, unless it be bound into one body by that one common institution of discipline, which having bound it from the first, is maintained and will be inflexibly, because reasonably maintained, by the great majority of Christendom. Again, therefore, with repeated urgency, he demands this institution for his own communion ; and, finding it, again acknowledges with joy the authority of his pastors, who are connected by the bonds of lively charity, no less than of traditional institution with the successors of the Apostles. Happy indeed is that communion, a land indeed is that which the Lord hath sworn unto them in which such men rest satisfied. And happy indeed and blessed are they, thankfully do they acknowledge that the lines have fallen to them in a fair ground. To be able to open the deed-chest of the Church,—and unroll its documents without an averted glance of misgiving, to look upward to spiritual fathers, and downward to spiritual sons, and find every requisite bond of charity entire ; to experience, as their information widens and feelings deepen, a proportionally growing conviction of the benefits of the

communion in which they have been nursed ; to see all but more and more harmoniously combining as their minds expand, all extending with their extent, from the little modern chapel, as it were, to which the notions of their uninformed minds had been confined, to the noble dome of ages under which they now stand and worship the great Bishop of souls.—This is indeed a precious blessing from God, and precious is the instrument which affords it. Surely, here is the land which God hath sworn, and the leaders which have brought us into it, have been of his appointment, and he has been with them.

Such minds are now met here ; and the consciousness of such excellent fellowship adds inexpressible force to the feelings of this solemn moment. What words shall embody them, and signify their intensity, or comprehend their variety ? Let us, for the sake of a definite path in so wide a field, recur to that scene, which has already supplied so much of the foregoing observations. Let us picture that scene to our minds, and set before our eyes the assembled people of God, witnessing this solemn inauguration, and hearing this inspired and inspiring address, with the ark of the covenant amid their ranks, with the mountains of the land of promise in the distance. Let us think on the fate of that ark, once lost in battle, and finally destroyed together with the temple, and of the inheritance of that

land, from which this people, after a partial restoration, was finally ejected at the point of the sword.

Then from this scene let us turn to what lies before us at this day and hour. God's word, delivered by his Son in confirmation and revelation of that which was spoken through Moses and the Prophets, has been read to us : the table spread for the symbols of the ratification of the new covenant is before our eyes : He that has promised to be present where two or three are met together in his name, is, we humbly trust, present with his Holy Spirit amongst us here. As members of the Catholic Church of Christ, we are conscious that our ark of faith can never be lost, nor our temple of sacrifice destroyed, nor the spiritual land of promise, whether it be God's Church on earth or in heaven, be taken away from its faithful inheritors. As members of our particular Church, although our ark has once been well nigh lost in the battle, and the ground of our earthly occupation of its blessings has once been narrowed to a spot, yet such a retrospect adds but brightness to our prospect. And past chastisement only gives distinctness and prominence to the signs of present approval. The land of our inheritance, as members of this Church, has been extended far beyond the most sanguine hopes of our fathers, and is now comprehended in countries which our reformers in their brightest speculations could scarcely have



contemplated, known as they were to them imperfectly and by vague report, as countries of savage men and unexplored wildernesses, or of powerful and populous nations of scarcely convertible unbelievers. Under such circumstances are we met on an occasion similar to that on which Israel was assembled to witness the appointment of Joshua. Amid such blissful reflections we behold the lifting up of another torch of light to illumine the course of the runners for the prize of the high calling in Christ. And who shall say what consequences are involved in this our meeting, what companies of preachers, and in what countries, may have their origin here. When Matthias was numbered with the eleven Apostles, the whole known world was awaiting its preachers. Rome, and Alexandria, and Antioch, with their countless daughters, were unconsciously involved in the germ of that assembly. An additional world, more than equal in extent to that awaits at this very day, and perhaps hour, its ambassadors of pardon and peace, from every such assembly as this, on which we are now met. How thankful does the mind of the Christian at such a glance feel for the past which has come down to him : how full of yearning hope and responsibility for the future, which shall proceed from him.

This has been, indeed, but a most imperfect review of the thoughts which crowd upon the mind on the present occasion, which is one of those

many calls which God makes in the ordinary course of his economy, upon our attention. In it he bids us well consider our profession, sum up our peculiar blessings : while of these we behold a token of the merciful continuance in the prolongation of that line of successive pastors to which, under his providence, we are indebted for them. In short, we are presented this day with a visible and lively summary, in which we may see at one glance the manifold mercies which, day after day, at sundry times and under sundry impressions, our hearts and our minds have been telling. In it we may see, through its outward forms, God's gracious election of our own country into the household of the faith, and our own election into the inheritance of the Saints in light, our own consecration as spiritual priests of his temple, we may review the length of days through which we have enjoyed these privileges, the number of opportunities which have been given for their high and solemn exercise. May it be unto us an occasion of grace, may it stir us up to thankful meditation on the duties of the position which we severally occupy in the Church of God. Standing at the calm and retired fountain-head of a preaching which is to resound through a course of many places, and of distant ages, and to break the solitude of spiritual wildernesses with the name of Christ crucified, let us, with the help of God's grace, lift up our hearts to a worthy contemplation of what is placed before us, and grasp to

obtain from the occasion some thought, among the many and solemn which it involves, which may lead a train of sound and lively principle, which may on some future day be manifested in an act of good and faithful practice.

The Israelite who witnessed the ordination of Joshua, and heard the encouraging words of the text, advanced soon afterwards without a murmur of misgiving to the brink of the overflowing Jordan, and strong in faith fearlessly committed himself to the hand of God, which had the power to arrest the stream. And may not the Christian encourage himself from a similar scene, and seeing in every accession of a new leader a renewal of the promise which his Lord hath made of abiding with his servants until the end of the world, and casting his eyes at such a moment over the mercies, some already vouchsafed, and others evidently in store for his Church, may he not brighten his lamp of faith, and fortify his resolution? May he not spiritualize that Jewish faith in God, and he that hath had the promise of the removal of spiritual mountains from the road to his everlasting inheritance, should they stand in the way, shall he come at all behind him, who hath had the river of earthly elements removed from his path to an earthly inheritance, or shall the antitype not be more excellent than the type? It is his privilege to find an occasion of inward grace in the outward ordinances of which he shall be witness, and from

the spectacle of such as this he may go forth with a bolder heart to struggle against the obstacles which beset his paths, and commit himself fearlessly in faith into the hands of Him who ordained Moses and Joshua, and the Prophets, and the Apostles and their successors, to carry on his Church unconquered to the end, and bring its faithful members to the further shore of the wide stream which separates the land of our pilgrimage from the land of our inheritance.

Thus thinking and thus feeling on this solemn occasion, let us, in humble but lively confidence, implore the aid of that Holy Spirit who qualified the first preachers for their work, and, gifting them with the word of regeneration, made them the fathers of many children. Let us boldly make our appeal before the throne of our Highpriest, of the Bishop of our souls, of the Master of the vineyard of the Church, and invoke for his deputed Priest and Bishop, and workman, and for his ministry and his work, the gifts and graces requisite to the service to which he has been called, and particularly (so far as is agreeable to his economy of the Church of these days) the blessing of that peculiar Apostolic gift, which, in the dialect of the Apostle of the Gentiles, is so intimately and significantly associated with the terms grace and forgiveness, and suggests to our minds, through justification and sanctification, both the essentials of our faith, and the ministration of the

Shepherd. May he have it abundantly, may he distribute it faithfully ! Let us pray unto the God of all power and might that he may be strong and of good courage, doing the work of the Lord diligently and fearlessly, through evil report and good report ; that he may be leader of many faithful followers to the promised land of the everlasting inheritance which the Lord hath sworn unto us, and that the Lord may be with him ; and may the Lord grant unto all such as shall be put under his administration a heart to serve him with the simplicity and cheerfulness of the obedience which is yielded for Christ's sake, with the zeal which is according unto knowledge, with the charity which thinketh no evil, remembering the worse than Egyptian bondage from which the Lord hath brought them, and the far more blissful country (in proportion as spirit is more precious than flesh) to which he is conducting them. Thus, in our several stations, whether of authority or of service, may we all be found faithful stewards of that which has been committed to us, and finally be judged worthy to receive the invitation to enter into the joy of our Lord !

THE END.

23. 1

THE INTERESTING DECLARATION  
OF A  
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY:

---

A Discourse,

PREACHED AT CLIFTON, BRISTOL,  
ON SUNDAY, NOV. 20, 1836;

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH

OF THE

REV. THOMAS OSBORNE,

LATE A MISSIONARY IN THE EAST.

BY JOSHUA FIELDEN.



—"I COUNT NOT MY LIFE DEAR UNTO MYSELF, SO THAT  
I MAY FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, AND THE MINISTRY  
WHICH I RECEIVED OF THE LORD JESUS, TO TESTIFY  
THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD." *Apostle Paul.*

"TELL THE PEOPLE,—I AM NOT DISAPPOINTED IN THE  
GOSPEL OF CHRIST—IT IS ALL CHARMING—SATAN IS NOT  
PERMITTED NOW TO ASSAIL ME—I AM CALMLY WAITING  
MY END—I AM JUST HOME."— *Missionary Osborne.*

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1836.



## A DISCOURSE, &c.

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CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

It is with mournful pleasure that I appear before you on this occasion. Funeral solemnities are always becoming and important; when we pay our last honours to the dead, we ought indeed to be most solemnly impressed and religiously affected; and when we have good and sufficient reason to assert "Happy are the faithful dead," we may record their virtues and their sayings with satisfaction and advantage. For my late excellent friend, and your late good minister and affectionate pastor, funeral sermons have been preached by my respected brethren in the ministry, in their regular appointments. Having had the privilege of hearing one of them upon the text particularly named by the deceased, I purposed speaking to you here on the subject of, *The Christian Minister concluding his service, and anticipating his Recompence*; as exhibited by the language of the Apostle Paul, in his se-



cond epistle to Timothy, iv. 6, 7, 8; but as none of you, that I know of, have heard any of the funeral sermons already delivered, I have, not perhaps in subjection to my better judgment, but certainly in accordance with *good feeling*, decided, to-day, to take the words particularly mentioned by MR. OSBORNE; not merely as the *motto*, but, indeed, the very *basis* of this evening's discourse.\*

Our dear departed friend did, I have no doubt, with much love and in great truth, affirm, unhesitatingly and joyfully, "*To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*" Let us now regard these words as, *The Interesting Declaration of a Christian Missionary*: and such was the excellent THOMAS OSBORNE, both officially and practically; and in that character these words were expressed by him.

This language was first employed by the Apostle Paul, in very peculiar circumstances of life and death, when he wrote to his friends, "The saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi." *Then,*

\* As the Preacher did not write a word of this Sermon *before* he preached it, nor for some days after, he does not vouch that it is *exactly* and *verbatim* the same as then delivered; but he believes it will be easily recognised by those who heard it, as he thinks there is no material alteration made by the writing of it. Under some painful difficulties it has been written; and *definiteness* and *conciseness* have been assiduously aimed at. The Preacher thought he was much too long in the delivery of the discourse, though the friends in the vestry afterwards kindly said not.—Thus much for explanation, as I wish to be correctly understood in all things. The whole should be regarded, in a kind, christian manner, as a feeble effort towards a worthy object. For his good feeling and good intention, the preacher and writer appeals to his Maker and his Judge.

standing as on the margin of eternity, he declared, "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN."—Philippians, i. 21.

This extraordinary, confident, and triumphant language is calculated truly to interest, affect, and move all our best feelings, and to excite us to inquire, particularly and anxiously, respecting the condition and character of the person who could speak and write after this manner.

Saul of Tarsus, formerly a distinguished, learned, imperious, blaspheming, and persecuting Jew, had been, as he relates, (Acts xxvi. &c.) miraculously, and quite supernaturally changed to a penitent, believing, humble, zealous, and most attached disciple of Jesus of Nazareth; and by the authority and grace of Christ the Lord, made, constituted, and ordained a minister, apostle, and missionary. This most eminent and illustrious man changed his *Hebrew* name Saul, to the *Roman* name Paul, probably as being more in accordance with his new views and intentions. It is probable that he laid the foundation of those literary attainments, for which he was so eminent in the future part of his life, at his native city of Tarsus, in Cilicia, south-east of Asia Minor; and he afterwards studied the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders, at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, a celebrated Rabbi. *But what things were gain to him, those he counted loss for Christ.*—(Phil. iii. 7.) He endured great labours and

sufferings in the cause of Christ, and was at last put to death, beheaded, by Nero, the emperor, perhaps in the year 66 or 68. Dr. Paley has excellently said, "We have in Paul a man of liberal attainments, and in other respects of sound judgment, who had devoted his life to the service of the gospel. We see him, in the prosecution of his purpose, travelling from country to country, enduring every species of hardship, encountering every extremity of danger, assaulted by the populace, punished by the magistrates, scourged, beat, stoned, left for dead; expecting, wherever he came, a renewal of the same treatment and the same dangers; yet, when driven from one city, preaching in the next; spending his whole time in the employment; sacrificing to it his pleasures, his ease, his safety; persisting in this course to his old age; unaltered by the experience of perverseness, ingratitude, prejudice, desertion; unsubdued by anxiety, want, labour, persecutions; unwearied by long confinement; undismayed by the prospect of death."

This great and extraordinary man, Saul the learned Jew, Paul the Christian Missionary, was in prison at Rome, confined there in order to be brought forth for execution, whenever Nero, the Roman Emperor, should issue the command. This first chapter of his pastoral and affectionate epistle to the Philippians, written at that time, presents us with the admirable views and feelings he indulged on the

occasion. See this undaunted man of virtue standing as on a narrow neck of land, betwixt two unbounded seas, secure, but not insensible, not stoical, not foolhardy; but alive to his situation, and sensible of his precarious state: yet, nevertheless, full of composure, calmness, and tranquility; regardless of himself, concerned most of all about others. Look at the apostle as in a state of mental *equilibrium*: "Life or death is equal, neither weighs;" then hear him say—"All weight in this, O let me live to thee!"

From some of his expressions in the context, there appears a little preponderance. For a while he was "in a strait betwixt two" opposite attractions of public and personal advantage. From important considerations, he was as willing to live, as from other views he had been desirous to die. He was willing to *bear* more, that he might *do* more, and to postpone *his own* enjoyment even of paradise itself, that he might bring *others* to enjoy it with him. Regard, now, this benevolent man as the gracious father of a family: when he consults only his own advantage, he has a "desire to depart and be with Christ," which to *himself*, would be "far better;" much, inexpressibly, more to his own benefit; but, beholding his children as orphans, paternal affection gains the ascendancy, and he is willing, yea desirous to continue longer in his sufferings and tribulations for their sakes. Thus he might

say, "It may be worth my while to live in the flesh, but what I shall choose, I know not."—*For, to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* This language is remarkably *laconic*, short and impressive; *comprehensive*, containing much matter in a few words; *absolute*, complete, and without any restriction; *magnanimous*, great and brave, showing forth the decision of character, and the heroism of Christianity; *sublime*, high and grand in style, and indicating a loftiness of sentiment truly becoming an Apostle of Christ. Considering the full purport of this apostolic phraseology, we may now resolve the whole into a view and consideration of, first, **A DEVOTED LIFE**; secondly, **AN ADVANTAGEOUS DEATH**.

I am particularly desirous that, now, there should be held up to your view a *striking likeness*, though not a *whole-length* portrait, of the incomparable Apostle Paul. I will, therefore, read to you the whole paragraph immediately connected with this subject, and the object also of my discourse on the present occasion. I do this also, with design, the more and better to corroborate and illustrate what I have already said, and what I may still have to advance. Beginning at the twelfth verse of this chapter, the Apostle thus speaks: "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in

all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again." This consecutive and most interesting statement must have tended much to strengthen the faith and console the

hearts of the christians at Philippi and elsewhere, who were greatly dejected and sorrowful because of Paul's imprisonment and probable martyrdom. In the Apostle's bonds, the gospel was not bound, and his very sufferings tended to confirm and propagate the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. He therefore said, "Christ is the supreme and ultimate object of my life, and I value it only as it is capable of being used to the purposes of His glory and honour; and, therefore, *to die is gain*, for as this predominant temper and prevailing disposition of my heart argues my friendship and love of that Redeemer who is the Lord of the invisible as well as the visible world, I am satisfied that he will make ample provision for my happiness, when I quit this transitory life, and surround me with far more abundant blessings than any which I must then resign. Nor is the utility of my death limited to my own advantage; it may be instrumental towards the conviction and salvation of others, by causing them to become the disciples of Christ; so that, in both cases, whether I regard the honour of Christ, or refer to my own eternal condition, *For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*"

Some read the words conjunctively; thus: *Christ is my gain in life and in death*: or, *Christ is to me, both in life and in death, advantage*. And, *To me, living or dying, Christ is gain*. There is much important truth in these renderings; but, I think Dr. Whitby's paraphrase

may be preferred: For, (*the motive*) to me to live is (*the service of*) Christ, and to die (*for him*) is,—will be—(*my greatest*) gain. Leaving out what the translators have supplied, and giving an *hiatus* to excite our cogitations, the text will read thus, *For to me to live—CHRIST, and to die—GAIN.\**

In the devoted life of this great Apostle there was a good and commendable *simplicity*. He possessed singleness of heart, and exhibited singleness of life. He had, strictly speaking, only *one* object in view; and he constantly looked and aimed at it. He took his eye off, or closed it upon all other objects which militated against or stood in competition with this one object. His own words are, “*One thing I do.*” (Phil. iii. 13.) Though well prepared for *two* worlds, he was, indeed, a man of *one* business. *Christ* was all the world to him, and all his heart was love to Christ. To him to live was Christ—To preach Christ, to proclaim his love, to make

\* An old, dateless Bible, in black print, before its division into verses, dedicated to King Edward the First, by Myles Coverdale, reads the passage thus:—*Christe shal be magnifyed in my body, whether it be thorrowe lyfe or thorrowe death, for Christe is to me lyfe, and death is to me ananmtage. But in as muche as to lybe in the fleshe is fruteful to me for the worke, I wote not what I shal chose, for both these thinges lye harde upon me. I desyre to be loused, and to be with Christe, which thinge were far better for me, but to abide in the fleshe is more nedeful for you, &c. —God is my recorde howe I longe after you all euen from the very hertes rote in Jesu Christe.*



known his salvation, and to extend the boundaries of his empire, was Paul's constant aim, unwearied endeavour, and sole employment. *Christ* was his Alpha and Omega—his first and last—his beginning and end—his motive and his object: *Christ* was Paul's *Jesus* and *Lord*—Saviour and Master: he had been blessed and saved by Christ, and now felt the obligation that was upon him to acknowledge, honour, and magnify his great and gracious benefactor and friend. He, therefore, said, *To me to live is Christ*: I have been brought into a spiritual, divine, and happy state by Christ: I have now life, enjoyment, and happiness through him, and in soul and body I will therefore live *to* him.—I am his *devoted* servant, consecrated, sanctified, and set apart for his use and service. I have no motive, no wish, no design to live, but *Christ*. His favour is my joy; his will my law; his pleasure my delight; his glory my end. And what, brethren, are the pleasures and joys of Christ? and what is his glory? Do not they all centre in the salvation and happiness of man? *Usefulness*, then, to the recently converted Christians, and newly planted churches, by confirming, establishing and building them up in the holy faith of the gospel; and, usefulness to the yet unchristianized parts of the world, by preaching Christ, “in regions beyond,” to those who were ignorant, superstitious, and miserable; and, by more labours, sufferings, bonds, imprisonments, for Christ's sake:

this usefulness to others, was so near and dear to Christ, so intimately and inseparably associated and blended with him, as to be indeed, by a christian process, and spiritual amalgamation, perfectly *one*: all was *Christ*. *He* was in all these objects, and they were all in *Him*. The master passion of Paul's heart, *love*, was thus intensely fixed on Christ's glory as including and advancing man's good. Like as various lines and rays issuing from one centre and focus, and verging to divers extremities, may be traced back to their commencing point, and be viewed as identically the same, so the apostle Paul's objects, affections, and labours had their rise in Christ, and in all their ramifications were in Christ, and returned to Him. Christ was their origin and their ultimatum. Such was the *devoted life* of the apostle Paul. To *him* to *live* was *Christ*.

An old Divine used rather startling language, when he said, "Christians should be like *little Christs* in the world." Whether we approve or censure the phraseology, we must allow and applaud the sentiment. *Christ* is indeed the *Principle*—the *Rule*—the *end* of a *christian's* life. We speak not now of a merely *nominal* christian, a christian only by name and profession, "A baptised infidel, worse for mending, washed to fouler stains;" but we intend here, *the* christian; such as are Christ—like, conformed to him; "transformed by the renewing of their minds." Such can say,

*To me TO LIVE is Christ*: or, in the words of *Wesley*, "To know, to love, to follow Christ, is my life, my glory, my joy."\* Such christians — Israelites indeed — live through and by Christ; and they live to him, and for him. This brings the matter home to our own hearts and bosoms. Let us examine ourselves now, whether *we christians* be "*in the faith*," whether we be "*in Christ Jesus*."

And should not, especially, all ministers, preachers, apostles and missionaries of Christ, try and compare themselves by and with Christ, and his Apostle Paul? Is this picture we have seen like them? Or are they like it? Ah, how inconsistent, how absurd to be *unchristian* ministers of Christ! And how lamentably, and too generally, is this the case, even in this "christian land"! O, if ministers of the gospel were more like Christ, and like-minded with his Apostle, Paul, what great and glorious effects would soon appear amongst the numerous classes and various orders of the human race, in all places where there are ministers of religion, reputed ministers of the gospel of Christ! How few, in the judgment of christian charity, can say, in the sense, and to the extent, Paul said, "*For me to live is Christ*." Where is the zeal, the fidelity, the disinterestedness, the perseverance of the Apostle Paul? Who can truly and fully say,

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\* Vide Wesley's notes on the place.

"The *love of Christ* doth me *constrain*  
 To seek the wandering *souls* of men :  
 With *cries, entreaties, tears*, to save,  
 To snatch them from a gaping grave."

And, in the spirit of a truly *devoted life* for Christ, can proceed to say, in any condition, before Christ, and with reference to the day of judgment:—

"*My life, my blood* I here present,  
 If for *thy truth* they may be spent ;  
 No cross I shun, I fear no shame,  
 All hail, reproach, and welcome pain !"

And are all *Missionaries* of Christ so *devoted to Christ*, as to be able to declare,

"I would the precious time redeem,  
 And longer live for this *alone*,  
 To *spend* and to be *spent* for them,  
 Who have not yet my Saviour known ;  
 Fully on these my *mission prove*,  
 And *only* breathe to *breathe thy love*."

O, brethren ! how does the sanctified, elevated heart of the Missionary of Christ, respond to these sublime feelings ! And under their hallowed influence he exclaims,

"'Tis worth living for this, to administer bliss,  
 And salvation in Jesus's name !"

Our dear departed friend OSBORNE did, I have reason to say, use language like the above, most truly and feelingly. I cannot forget how I have seen him take hold of his poor paralyzed

arm, and with great animation and pleasure, exclaim, "O, if I could but preach again, how delightful it would be, &c." When in a state of considerable convalescence, he once or twice made an attempt, but the effort was too much for his physical strength, and mental debility. His whole soul seemed then to feel and say,

"Now, my God, thine own I am ;  
Now I give thee back thine own :  
Freedom, friends, and health, and fame,  
Consecrate to thee alone :  
Thine I live, thrice happy I !  
Happier still, if thine I die."

*To die is gain* : so believed, and so spake the excellent OSBORNE. With the Apostle, he had known the happiness, advantage and gain of *living for Christ* on earth, and he was divinely and fully assured of the certainty, happiness, advantage and gain of living *with* Christ in Paradise.

Let us, secondly, attempt to look, or rather *glance*, at the Christian's ADVANTAGEOUS DEATH. Death follows and concludes life. "When this short life is o'er, man dies to live, and lives to die no more." It is appointed unto man once to die: the living know that they shall die; we must needs die. But "Death is a melancholy day to those who have no God." Death makes cowards of the greatest heroes of the world. "Virtue alone gives majesty in death." How many are little better than what is represented by "Cato's soliloquy to

his soul." When they contemplate death, and think about dying, they are full of fearful anxiety, dreadful dismay, and direful apprehensions. And no marvel; there is serious cause for their wretched forebodings. Christ has not been their life, and therefore, they have no good hope that death will be their gain. But those, for whom to live is Christ, can be happy in this life. Religion, *Christ*, is now gain, a great good and advantage to them; and they can contemplate death with calmness and joy. The feelings, and views, and words of our dear departed friend were, indeed, very peculiar and happy, yea triumphantly happy, in reference to these all important matters.—“Tis all light,” said he, “and not only light, but *brilliant*.” When it was on one occasion, said to him, your afflictions are not light, “No,” he replied, “but the glory that shall be revealed far exceeds them—a *weight* of glory!” Thus did he look to the *recompence of reward*; and thus was he able to say, *To die is gain*.

The apostle Paul spake these words when in the view of a violent death—of martyrdom. It was then likely that he might lose his head, but not his soul: this was safe. He did not therefore fear him who could kill the body only, but after that had no more power; but he feared Him, who was able to destroy both body and soul in hell; yea, he feared Him. And he loved him, and served him, and rejoiced in him as his Saviour and Lord. Being secure

and blessed in Christ, the apostle had nothing to lose, but every thing to gain, whether he lived or died. If he lived longer in the body, on earth, he would have the pleasure and satisfaction of serving Christ, by preaching his gospel, and endeavouring the salvation of men. And the salvation of man is that which God has infinitely at heart, and to accomplish which the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost work hitherto. The apostle and his coadjutors were "workers together with God." If he lived, his life would principally advantage *others*, but if he died, (no matter *where, when, or how*, as to the manner of his death,) his death would principally and mostly advantage himself. To *me to die is gain*.

Upon serious, important, and, especially, eternal matters, it is most desirable to be able to speak with *certainty*.\* There is no conjecture, no doubt, no peradventure in the language of the Apostle Paul. And his assurance did not arise from ignorance, carelessness, or presumption, as is the case with some. O no, far otherwise: the Apostle Paul well and truly understood the whole matter; was most solicitously concerned about it, and had such an humble, rational, and divine persuasion of its verity, as caused him to exult, *unutterably full of glory*

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\* On one occasion, Mrs. Osborne said to her husband, "Thomas, if you should be taken from us *suddenly*, and die in one of these fits, may we be *sure* you are happy?" "O yes!" he replied, "unless you can prove the Bible to be false, and God untrue,—I have no doubt—you need have none—I am in God's hands."

*and of God.* He had the *earnest* of the Spirit in his heart. He was acquainted with the *philosophy of religion*. He had what is justly termed, christian experience. Therefore, he not only believed, and hoped, but he *knew*: “We *know* that we are of God;” “We *know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we *have* a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit: therefore, we are always *confident*—(2 Cor. v. 1, &c.) I *know* whom I have believed, and am *persuaded* that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”—(2 Tim. i. 12.) Now certainty is readily allowed in mathematical and chemical science, and why should any attempt to disallow it in the more important, and most interesting science of human salvation? But the knowledge, the experience, the certainty which christians have of their present and future state, must, in the nature of the case, be *finite*, and incomplete in the *degree*. To a perfection of *quality* we may attain, but to a perfection of *quantity* we never can attain, either in this world or in the world to come. Man must ever remain finite, and God be infinite, through immortal perfection.

In reference to the future reward of righteousness, and the *gain* of dying in the Lord, “we walk by *faith*, not by sight,” and, with all the assurance of faith, and the exultation of certainty,



we know but in part, and see but through a *darkened glass*; but then, "*face to face*!"

In order to justify the bold language in the text, take a mental view of this world and the next; contrast not the sufferings, but the joys of christians on earth and in heaven. Suppose a christian about to die, to be most comfortably circumstanced in this life, he will not lose but gain by dying. He may depart from affectionate friends and delightful associations, but he will go to the spirits of the just made perfect, to friends and saints, amongst whom there shall be nothing but love and joy, through all eternity! Here, while in the body, our love is very imperfect, and our joys are mutable and incomplete; but in heaven love shall be fervent and unalterable; and there we shall have a "fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore." There, saints "eternity spend in a rapture of heavenly love." Christians shall exchange earth for paradise, in every respect, for the better—for the *best*. By dying they shall lose all that is evil, and shall gain all that is good.

To die is gain: *lawful* — *present* — *great* — *complete* — *everlasting* gain. It would be delightful indeed to dilate on each of these views of our future happiness, but we must forbear: a word of a sort only can now be added; but let your meditations frequently dwell upon these glorious truths.—In this world, with some men, there are *unlawful* gains. They make unjust profits, and take improper advantages; but

let them not deceive themselves, God is not mocked by their unrighteous dealings, nor shall they be able to impose upon and deceive Him, in reference to their eternal concerns: none can gain heaven in a roguish way, depend upon it. It is possible to profess faith in religion, and to do some good, yea, "many mighty works," in Christ's name, and yet be reprobates before Him. In the way of *uprightness*, the godly "press towards the mark" of holiness, "for the prize" of eternal life.—The christian obtains a *present* gain by dying: he is willing, therefore, to be absent from the body, that he may be present with the Lord. Yea, he longs to depart, to be loosened from the body, that he may be with Christ. The divine oracles contain nothing about *soul-sleeping*, and *purgatory*, or any intermediate state, without consciousness and without happiness. "*To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*" In the happy exercise of faith and hope, saints in paradise wait for *that day*, when they shall receive that which is *laid up* for them in heaven. The vastness of their full reward, a whole eternity shall prove.—This lawful gain, this immediate advantage, will be abundant in magnitude—*great* gain. In its quality and quantity, in its weight and measure, it will be far beyond our present views; incomparably, unutterably, inconceivably great; "A far more, exceeding, and eternal weight of glory." And all this lawful, present, and great gain shall be *complete*; in its nature and quality full and

perfect. Ah, how unlike, how infinitely superior to all worldly gains.—And then, in its duration, unceasing, undying, *everlasting*. O, what a good, what an advantage, what a gain!

By dying, the christian will gain, obtain, at the end of his course—attain unto *enlarged knowledge*. Here, at most, all we know is very finite, limited, circumscribed, bounded. How near is our horizon! we cannot see afar off. Nor can we understand and comprehend much in this imperfect state of being. After death, all obscuring mediums shall be removed. And then, our heavenly knowledge shall exceed, on the comparison, our earthly knowledge, as far as the light of the sun exceeds that of a mere glow-worm!

Farther, after death we shall gain *perfect enjoyment*; superior to all that can possibly be felt while in this body, on earth. Here our embryo faculties and mortal existence forbid our enjoying much in nature; and positively, by parity of reason, cause that paucity of enjoyment to be necessarily incomplete and imperfect in its degree. But in the spiritualised, ethereal, paradisiacal state, all these defections of quality, and incompleteness of quantity, shall be absorbed in the perfect adaptation, absolute purity, and unending duration of our enjoyments.

By dying, we shall lose this body, in its present condition of infirmity, and subjection to vanity; but we shall gain a new,

glorious, *resurrection body*! "Why should it be thought incredible that God should raise the dead." Is any thing too hard for the Almighty Lord of all!

"And deems proud man the future promise vain,  
When worms can die, and glorious rise again?"

"The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality." It, this body, is sown a natural, or *animal*, body; it is raised a spiritual body.

"Corruption, earth and worms, shall but refine this flesh,  
Till the triumphant spirit comes to put it on afresh."

Yes, brethren, the spirit shall meet again, and be reunited to its body. There will be a future existence to the entire man: in the original and literal meaning, man shall *stand up*, or *stand again*. After this "vile body," or body of humiliation, has on earth bended under the pressure of the various ills to which flesh is heir, and been in a stooping posture by the common infirmities of our common nature, it shall *stand up*—be upright; and after it has been humbled to the dust, and for a time lain under the earth, it shall *stand again*: a glorious body, fashioned and made like unto Christ's glorious body, according to his mighty working, whereby he is able to do all things.

Lastly here, and briefly be it now observed, saints, by dying, shall gain an *infinite progres-*

*sion in happiness.* Before death, while in the body on earth, our happiness, from a divine source, may be increased in proportion to our holiness, but not after an *infinite* ratio. Subsequent to the general resurrection and judgment, the happiness of the righteous will, doubtless, be greatly augmented by the blessed conjunction of the beatified spirit, and glorious spiritual body. Then, in that consummated, perfected state, our capacities will be competent to make everlasting out-goings in the infinitude of the uncreated, everliving ETERNAL. Oh, blissful thought! and truly legitimate link in "Being's endless chain," We shall live throughout all life; and, for ever, increase with the increase of God. Our enjoyments will be rapturous, and our prospects will be extatic! In his presence, (in paradise) there is *fulness* of joy, and at his right hand, (in heaven) there are pleasures for *evermore*. Brethren! let your deathless spirits, in character, aspire after imperishable good. And, in the christian faith, let your hope be living and sure, of a reserved happiness, all divine, and without end. This finite, bounded vision shall soon be changed to the extended and ever-extending views of immortal scenes. *Then* shall we see, and know, and enjoy, throughout all the ages of heaven, all that now indescribable and inconceivable beatitude, for which the blessed, infinite God created, redeemed, and saved us. *Then* shall our unbounded happiness and pleasures live and

flourish in immortal youth—in meridian day—and with ever growing freshness. They shall be then, large as immensity, and long as eternity.

But “it doth not yet appear what we shall be,” nor what we shall enjoy of the unmeasured and unmeasurable felicity, laid up in heaven for us, and to be experienced by us throughout the never-ending progress of duration; yet, from this faint glance, seen in the great distance, who does not exclaim, O the gain, ‘the bliss of dying!’ “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?”—But who now says, let me *live his life*; “To me to live is Christ”?—Let your death alone, and attend to your life. Let Christ be your life now, and death shall be the way to your gain hereafter. Be Christians, live *Christ*. The Christian’s God will support him in his final hour, and his final hour will bring glory to his God.

Ever let Preachers and Missionaries look at the renowned apostle of the gentiles. How eminently pious—devoted—philanthropic—public-spirited—and divinely heroic, he was. The love of God in Christ to himself, and to man, constrained him, bore him along as on a sweeping torrent;—carried him out of himself—beyond himself—and above himself, yea, and above men and this world,—for the good of man, and for the glory of God. In his case, indeed, there appears to have been nothing less than a *mighty impetus upon a master spirit*.—By all ministers, especially and most seriously, let his own words be heard and felt—“Be ye followers of me as I am

of Christ." Let His spirit be more imbibed, and his conduct better imitated. Then will even Christian ministers have more true simplicity, and be more abundantly useful. With too many, alas, it is—'Christ and *Co.*' O how solemnly important to be, like the divine apostle Paul, *single-hearted*, and *single-handed*, to have only *one purpose* in the mind, and *one object* in the life. Thus, to be able to affirm in the best and fullest sense of the words, "*To me to live is Christ.*"

Finally, let *all* Christians be continually progressing towards higher and higher perfection in holiness on earth, and of happiness in heaven. —"Were we to ascend with a continual flight towards the sun, and could, like the eagle, gaze directly on its lustre, we should in our progress behold its greatness continually enlarge, and its splendour become every moment more intense. As we rose through the heavens, we should see a little orb changing gradually into a great world; and, as we advanced nearer and nearer, should behold it expanding every way, until all that was before us became a universe of excessive and immeasurable glory." Thus the redeemed saint will, at the commencement of his future happy state, see magnificence and splendour, arrayed in glory and beauty; and, as he advances onward through the successive periods of duration, will behold all things more and more luminous, transporting, and *sun-like* for ever! *Then we shall know that, To DIE IS GAIN.* Amen.

IN addition to what I have already said, respecting our dear deceased friend, MR. OSBORNE, I now subjoin some further account of him, by making extracts from a paper which his friend and coadjutor in *Ceylon*, the Rev. JOSEPH ROBERTS, drew up for his own use, and that of his brethren, after preaching Mr. OSBORNE's funeral sermons. I read part of these extracts after I had delivered the preceding Discourse, in connection with what I was in possession of from my own personal knowledge. Mr. Roberts's account is already pretty long; but can be still lengthened by him, in a very interesting manner, with the addition of various Missionary incidents, &c. And I do hope, that he will kindly and early favour the public, through the medium of the Magazine, with such a memoir of his late friend, as cannot fail to gratify and interest all who shall read it. My task now, will therefore be only a very short, general sketch; and this will be as much as can be given within the intended limits of the present publication.

We have not learned that MR. OSBORNE's childhood and early youth were characterized by any thing peculiar and incidental. At the age of seventeen years he became truly religious. Soon afterwards, he associated with some class of dissenters, and there were serious intentions of proposing him for the Christian Ministry amongst them; but his frank avowal of certain doctrinal sentiments operated as a prevention.

He then became particularly acquainted with the Wesleyan Methodists; and, in a letter to a friend, promptly said,—‘This people shall be my people, and their God my God.’

At the age of eighteen, he attempted to compose sermons. In the village where he resided, he hired a place where he might establish a sabbath school; and there he spent the principal part of the holy day, till he began more publicly to expound the gospel which he afterwards so excellently preached, both at home and abroad. He was received into the Methodist Itinerant Ministry, and after



employing about two years in England, he was excited to compassionate the heathen afar off. In a short time he was prepared and sent out a Missionary to the Island of *Ceylon*: Messrs W. B. Fox, and R. Newstead went along with him. The ship in which they embarked left the Downs on the 4th of November, 1816. They were soon exposed to a very furious gale, which compelled them to run under a close-reefed fore-top-sail. Mr. Osborne's sufferings were very great; and when apparently near a watery grave, he was asked if he did not repent embarking, he promptly replied, "No! I wish to be nowhere but where I am—I am willing to die now, if God pleases." In a joint letter to England, signed by Mr. Osborne and his companions, they say—"We had two ports in view, Heaven and Ceylon, and which to choose we knew not: We felt happy in those circumstances, rejoicing that we were on such an errand, and had not the slightest wish to be any where else." The ship arrived at Galle, in Ceylon, on the 25th of April, having been about six months on the voyage.

Mr. Osborne's first station was *Trincomalee*, the great naval depôt of the East. After being there a short time, he was seized with the "jungle fever," and never afterwards entirely recovered his former self. From a letter, dated Jaffna, June, 1818, we learn there were serious apprehensions of his life, if he remained where he was; the brethren Erskine and Squance, then at Jaffna, urged him to remove there as soon as possible. He did so; and in a little time recovered. By assiduous efforts, he became well acquainted with the *Portuguese* language; and Mr. Roberts says, they had not a more competent preacher in Portuguese, than Mr. Osborne; so that the natives called him the *Bom Padri*, the good Preacher.

It was not only as a preacher the people esteemed him; but also as a friend and pastor: testimony was borne to his benevolent and successful efforts for the good of the people. In Jaffna, he was the principal instrument in establishing a Benevolent Society. In September, 1819, he sailed for *Batticaloa*; and on his passage experienced

a dreadful thunderstorm, near to the place where the ship *Tanjore*, (in which were the Missionary brethren, Mowatt and Hooke) was struck by lightning, and burned to the water's edge. When attempting to land in a boat, he narrowly escaped being drowned. In Batticaloa, Mr. O. formed a Bible and Benevolent Society; an account of which he gives under date of April, 1820. He also re-established a school, which had been commenced by his predecessor, the Rev. W. Ault, who had died. Mr. O. when in health, and happy in his work, was very heavenly in his feelings. In a letter to some friends, dated December 29, 1820, he writes in this unearthly spirit. "It is often to me a pleasing thought that my labours are so rapidly drawing towards their end; not that I am tired of the work, nor unwilling to tarry longer in it, for the good of those who are ready to perish; but I feel anxious for the full enjoyment of that glory which is in reserve: I long for the society of the 'church of the first-born,' and of just men made perfect." Shortly after the above letter was written, he re-occupied the important station of *Jaffnapatam*. His first business there, now, was to erect a chapel. After overcoming various difficulties, he was enabled to finish the undertaking; and it stands as a monument to his good taste, zeal and perseverance. Mr. O. made successful efforts here also, in conjunction with others, for the formation of a Bible Society. A meeting on the occasion was convened and held in the Provincial Court House, at which he earnestly advocated its hallowed objects. Thus did Mr. O. proceed, endeavouring to do good by all possible means, with the *piety, zeal, love, fidelity and perseverance*, becoming a *Christian Missionary*.

But this career of piety and usefulness soon terminated in a foreign land. Serious affliction in his family, with medical opinion and advice positively given upon it, determined his return to his native country. With his family he landed on his native shore, in June, 1824; having been nearly six months on their voyage from *Colombo*. Mr. O. spent the two following years, as an itinerant minister, in his native county of Norfolk, at *Dis*, &c.

He was then removed, by appointment of the annual Conference, to *Brighton*, where he continued three years. He next spent a year at *Colchester*; and afterwards two at *Cheltenham*. In August, 1832, he was removed to *Bristol*; and here was concluded the mortal story—his labours and his life.

For about a year and a half, Mr. O. very acceptably and efficiently performed his ministerial functions and pastoral duties in this city. It will be for his biographer to exhibit a more detailed and circumstantial account of our gracious, and now glorious friend; and, this I believe may and will be done to good advantage. Leaving, then, many things worthy of being told, and worthy of being imitated, I hasten to depict briefly the closing scene. For upwards of two years and a-half, Mr. O. was greatly afflicted. He was suddenly seized with paralysis on a Sunday evening, between his house (Portland street) and a Chapel (St. Philips) to which he was going to preach. At a short distance from his house, he suddenly fell down in the street. A medical gentleman, a kind neighbour of Mr. O. passing that way at the time, had him instantly taken home, and attended to him. In a little time he was sensible, and could speak tolerably: he expressed his greatest anxiety to be about his preaching, and whether the congregation would be disappointed, &c. And, so intense were his feelings, that he attempted to rise from the sofa, and tumbled on the floor: and this alone assured him that he could not walk, and preach that evening. There had been some little premonition of what came to pass, but it was not understood, therefore, not regarded. This illness was long, and very painful to himself and his family, yet he seldom or never complained; but would speak most pleasantly and gratefully, of the goodness of God, and the kindness of friends. In the economy of the Methodist itinerant ministry, there is not an *adequate* provision and support, *as some suppose*, for those who become afflicted, or partially unable for the regular *whole* work. Able and kind friends considered this, and commendably and justly came forward in Mr. O's case, which was very

affecting, to alleviate and to aid.\* For about two months before the mortal course was finished, after having had many changes from convalescence to relapse, it appeared to himself and others, that he could not much longer remain in the body. His sufferings, from his paralysed parts, and also from the asthma, were extreme. When I visited him in this state, he said, very impressively, "O, brother Fielden! my groaning is now heavy, but my stroke is heavier.—It will soon be over—All is well," &c. &c. My feelings were quite overcome, but I spoke, as I was able, of the afflictions of some being for the good of others—and prayed for him. His spirit and sayings were quite of an unearthly order. About this time, when Mr. ROBERTS called to see him, he said, "My voyage is just finished; my ship is at anchor; and I only wait for a boat to take me to the shore." He then began to talk in Portuguese, and on being reminded, in the same language, that he would see many black people in heaven, to whom he had preached the word of life, in Ceylon, he replied, "*Nao, Senhor, &c.—they will be washed,—washed white—white.*" At another time he said—"Tell the people, I am not disappointed in the Gospel of Christ: tell them it is all charming—I am just home: I sometimes think I hear the singing." He repeatedly expressed his full triumph and joy. "Satan, (said he) is not permitted to assail me—I am here at rest, calmly waiting my end.—When you take me to the grave, sing over me, 'Jesus, the name high over all,' &c. and, when you put me into the grave, tell the people, *I go down with a smile, and shall arise with a shout!*"

The Rev. JOHN SMITH, who was one of Mr. O's colleagues at the time he fell ill, and who has been in Bristol during

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\* These friends acted well by thus doing their *duty* to their beloved pastor; and they would do well by endeavouring to excite a general, legitimate improvement in the constitution of the increasingly great and important system. This is become imperiously necessary. Means are in existence; and they ought to be directed to their proper course, and their right object. Christ, our gracious and just Master would approve of this; and all good men and true, would certainly sanction it most heartily, as a *just and righteous regulation*.

the whole of his affliction,—has just handed me the following, which I here subjoin to the preceding account :

“Never did I feel the hallowed meaning of Dr. Young’s remark so much, as when I visited my late friend Mr. Osborne ;

‘The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileg’d beyond the common walk  
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven.’

The last time I saw him, on my entering the room, he said, ‘Brother Smith, I have just got to the edge of the river.’ I hope, said I, the place where you will cross will be narrow and smooth, he replied, ‘Wherever or however that may be, it will be all right.’ He then said, ‘Few persons have greater cause for thankfulness than I: my life has been a life of mercy; and though I am so much afflicted, I am surrounded with kind friends, and feel the peace and love of God in my heart.’ And then, with emphatic feeling, he added, (as the tears of joy ran down his emaciated face) ‘I am just about to enter heaven, which will make amends for all.’ To his youngest child, who stood with anxious gaze by the side of the bed, he said, ‘My dear, when you see this poor body in the coffin, you must not think that it is your father—only your father’s old great coat—your father will then be in heaven!’ He then requested me to read a verse which he had just written in his daughter’s album, as an expression of his parental affection, as follows :

‘I bear a Father’s name,  
I feel a Father’s care;  
And tho’ decrepid, weak, and lame,  
Can breathe a Father’s prayer.’

‘THOMAS OSBORNE.’”

The mortal conflict was ended, and the prepared spirit departed—from the suffering body, to the triumphant joys of paradise—on Sunday evening, 30th October, 1836. On the following Friday, the body was interred in the grave in which his oldest and gracious Son had been buried a few months before, in St. Philip’s Chapel-yard, Bristol.

SAINT PAUL'S VIEW OF THE PASTORAL CARE.

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST, CANTERBURY,

BEFORE

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP,

AT

THE TRIENNIAL VISITATION OF THE DEANERIES OF  
BRIDGE AND ELHAM;

ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3. 1836.

BY

THE REV. CHARLES FORSTER, B.D.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF ASH NEXT SANDWICH,  
AND ONE OF THE SIX PREACHERS.

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**PUBLISHED BY COMMAND.**

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TO  
HIS GRACE  
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

AND  
THE REVEREND  
THE CLERGY OF THE DEANERIES OF BRIDGE  
AND ELHAM,

*The following Discourse,*

PUBLISHED BY HIS GRACE'S COMMAND,

AND AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS  
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.





## A SERMON.

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II TIM. iv. 5.

‘ WATCH THOU IN ALL THINGS,  
ENDURE AFFLICTIONS,  
DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST,  
MAKE FULL PROOF OF THY MINISTRY.’

A SHORT consideration of the state and circumstances of the particular Church, over which he to whom this Epistle is addressed, presided, may be found to throw useful light on the apostolic counsels in the Text. For while, as may plainly be gathered from the sacred history, the ministerial trust of Saint Timothy extended, as occasion might require, to the most distant limits of the church at large ; it is, at the same time, most evident, from the contents of the Epistles addressed to him by Saint Paul, that the circumstances of the Church of Christ at Ephesus, and the episcopal charge of Saint Timothy over the Ephesian Christians, were, throughout both letters, predominantly in the Apostle's view.

This matter, my reverend brethren, can be no unseasonable subject for our present contemplation, if it may contribute to lead the minister of Christ to a closer practical estimate of the portion of holy Scripture whence the Text is derived, as the latest, and assuredly not the least, of those peculiar provisions, which the wisdom of God has made, for the education and establishment, in all ages of the Church, of a christian, catholic, and apostolic ministry.

The first seeds of those false doctrines, and of the dissensions consequent on them, in the Ephesian church,—with safeguards and warnings, and exhortations against which, the two Epistles to Timothy are filled, may clearly be discerned in Saint Luke's narrative of the introduction of Christianity into that celebrated place. The blind and persecuting bigotry of the Jews, opposed as we uniformly find it to the ministry of Saint Paul, in every place and period of this Apostle's labours,—in the city of Ephesus was distinguished by more than ordinary characters of subtilty and perseverance. At the lesser Antioch, at Iconium, at Thessalonica, and at Corinth, 'the Teacher of the Gentiles,' indeed, experienced much and violent opposition from those of his own nation. The opposition of the Jewish inhabitants of these cities ended, however, as the Providence of God designed it

should end, only in compelling the Apostle of the Gentile world, to give himself, henceforward, unreservedly to his proper calling ; or, at furthest, in expelling him, for a season, from their respective districts. In Ephesus alone, the craft and obstinacy of Jewish zeal seem to have had their full course ; and, so far at least as the personal ministration of Saint Paul within that city was concerned, to have finally prevailed.

Presently on his first arrival at Ephesus, Saint Paul, after his usual manner, preached Christ Jesus, first, amongst his brethren of the circumcision. Week after week, for the space of three months, he spake boldly in their synagogue, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. Their toleration, however, during so long a period, of the Apostle's doctrine, in the case of the Jews of Ephesus, served only to bring more fully into light the deeply-rooted spirit of their unbelief ; and to plant eventually within the Church of Christ in that city, the seeds of those false doctrines, perverse disputations, and grievous dissensions, so pathetically anticipated by the holy Apostle himself, in his last interview with the Elders of the church of Ephesus, at Miletus.

Hence his denunciations, in the Epistles to Timothy, the appointed head and guardian of this great church, against false and judaizing

teachers, those grievous wolves, who, as he forewarned the Ephesian Elders, should enter in, after his departure, not sparing the flock. Hence also his urgent, reiterated admonitions, throughout the same Epistles, against Jewish fables, endless genealogies, vain janglings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds.

While, however, on the one hand, the busy dissemination of these unsound doctrines, and the wily incursions of those wicked men, disturbed the peace, and threatened the permanence of the Ephesian church,—within that church, on the other hand, were to be found large materials, capable of being improved into perfectness of christian living and belief. This compensatory fact, were there no further evidence of it in the New Testament, is abundantly established by the one document—the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians: an Epistle in which, the subject-matter, and the whole style of the address, betoken in the community for whose instruction it was immediately designed, no ordinary proficiency in spiritual wisdom.

Such, it appears, were the state and circumstances of that church of Ephesus, over which Saint Timothy was ordained the ruler. On the one side, assailed by false and strange doctrines, with envy, strife, railings, pride, and such-like

lamentable consequences in their train; alternately tried by seducers, apparently, the most opposite in their views and characters;—by the judaizing christian, and by the reprobate Jew;—by clamorous enemies, and by insidious friends: on the other hand, upheld, by the past fatherly teaching of the chief of the Apostles; by the constant fidelity, doubtless, of many amongst the Elders of the Church; and still more effectually, by the deep, though silent working of the Spirit of Truth, in the minds and hearts of those amongst the disciples at large, who having received the word, at the first, in an honest and good heart, brought forth, in after time, its fruits with patience.

If we may conceive this latter view of the church of Ephesus to have afforded Saint Timothy strong ground of encouragement, in the firm and faithful discharge of his sacred office,—that less cheering view which we before touched upon, must, it is too evident, have presented before him, as subject of the most anxious responsibility, the duties, the difficulties, and the dangers of his awful trust.

So long as, by the good Providence of God, the Apostle of the Gentiles was preserved unto the Church of Christ, what there was of critical or trying in the situation of his disciple, would admit indeed of much and effectual relief.

Timothy, in every emergency, could commit himself implicitly to the advice and direction of that wise master-builder, 'his counsellor, his guide, and his own familiar friend.' But, when it should please God to withdraw the master-builder from his work, it is not difficult to conjecture how deeply the anxiety of the disciple would be aggravated, when, to the consciousness of the manifold dangers and difficulties of his trying ministry, was added the still more painful consciousness, that *he*, whose constancy could meet, whose wisdom could counteract, and whose prophetic spirit could anticipate, all that might gainsay or resist the truth of God, was to be the shield of the Church, and of his faithful follower, no longer.

But, however deeply that follower must have felt, all that is conveyed in the thought of such a separation, — *his* feelings and anxieties can yet bear little comparison with those, which must, at this eventful period, have pressed on the parental and apostolic spirit of his master. With the enlarged eye of faith, and of a prophetic foresight, Saint Paul indeed, in such a season, would reach far beyond subjects of present disquietude and trial. *He* would discern the seed only and promise of rich future harvests to the Church, in every present disposal of the high Providence of God. Still, together with the loftier views and

spirit answering to his vocation, Saint Paul, it will be remembered, united, in his character and example, the tenderest feelings of the man. It is needless to remark, how deeply such feelings must have been touched and awakened, by the contemplation of his martyrdom, now nigh at hand. The internal, and the external perils of the Churches ; the destitute estate (humanly speaking) of all whom, heretofore, his presence had cheered, his wisdom counselled, his tongue and his pen edified and confirmed in the faith of Christ ; — these, and many such-like considerations, would naturally crowd in on the holy Apostle's mind with this one reflection, — that the Churches of Christ Jesus, and the children of God, throughout the world, who owned him for their Apostle, should “ see his face no more !”

That such was the frame of the Apostle's mind, when “ the time of his departure was at hand,” his second Epistle to Timothy is the imperishable record. In this spirit of fatherly and apostolical anxiety for the welfare of the Church of God at Ephesus, and of its ordained head, he opens his parting instructions to the beloved Timothy in the words of the text : “ Watch thou in all things ; endure afflictions ; do the work of an Evangelist ; make “ full proof of thy ministry.”



The intrinsic force and significance of this final exhortation (for with this sentence the apostolic counsels of the whole letter conclude) as a rule of life and duty, not to Timothy only, but to the ministers of Christ Jesus, in all ages of his Church, have been already pointed out, and pressed on our attention, by the considerations, of the circumstances under which the Epistle was written, the situation of the individual-pastor to whom it was addressed, and the critical state, both at the time and in the prospect, of the Ephesian Church.

From these introductory reflections, we pass on now to the more particular consideration of the apostolic injunctions in the Text.

It can, I am persuaded, be little needful to prepare the way, for the right apprehension of that great first-principle of all ministerial usefulness and duty,—that, in order to the effectual discharge of his trust and office, each individual husbandman in the field of the Gospel, should have the seed of all his future harvest implanted, at the first, and nurtured, within the soil of his own heart. To this fundamental principle, accordingly, in his concluding exhortation to his son Timothy, Saint Paul assigns the foremost place.

I. “Watch thou in all things.” That the admonition which these words convey, related

mainly to the *personal* institution of his disciple, and in an especial manner regarded the government and safeguard of the heart of Timothy, might be sufficiently inferred from the ascertained signification of the expression, in the original, which our translators have here rendered “watch,” — and from its acknowledged force in every other instance of its occurrence in the New Testament. The *practical* interpretation is, however, placed beyond question, by a further consideration. The context immediately preceding the charge here before us, relates to dangers which threatened the church of Ephesus, from false and judaizing teachers. To this context, a parallel place occurs, in the sixth chapter of Saint Paul’s first Epistle to Timothy. And here the Apostle’s warning voice against these vain deceivers, is immediately followed up by an earnest personal appeal to his disciple, exhorting him, as the only unfailing antidote to the impending evil, to look the more diligently to the safe-keeping of his own heart : an appeal, which is nothing else than the more detailed explication of those words of his second Epistle — “Watch thou in all things.”

This admonition, then, directs us, in the first place, to such of Saint Paul’s instructions, in his Epistles to Timothy, as relate to the growth, progress, and confirmation of his disciple, in

holiness of mind, and heart, and life. And of what character are these instructions? They are — To hold faith and a good conscience; to be not only himself of a holy life and conversation, but in such measure, as to become a bright pattern of sanctity in the Church of Christ. ‘Be thou,’ saith the Apostle, ‘an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Keep thyself pure. O man of God! follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life. I give thee charge in the sight of God, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

It would be impracticable to attempt the expansion, on the present occasion, of this weighty summary of christian living. Each precept supplies subject for large and profitable discourse. But there is another way of viewing this body of instruction, which, on this occasion, it can be neither untimely, nor unprofitable, to suggest: — namely, that each particular lesson here laid down, supplies the christian pastor with materials for self-inspection, — for meditation on his own state in the sight of God. In this particular light, undoubtedly, Saint Paul himself regarded

them, when he addressed those precepts, in so brief a form, to the chief pastor of the church of Ephesus. Meditation, he must have been fully sensible, deepened and directed by the enlivening influences of God's Holy Spirit (the fruit of fervent and effectual prayer), could alone qualify even that favoured pastor, to mark with sound judgment, to learn in meekness of wisdom, and inwardly to digest by stayed and mature reflection, this pregnant compend of our institution into the christian ministry. And shall not we, my reverend brethren, the successors in this ministry of Saint Timothy, and of Saint Paul, study to approve ourselves not unworthy of the same trust, with that which the Apostle here reposes in his friend and fellow-labourer, — enlarging for ourselves, after a like effectual method, the inmost substance of those principles of life and godliness, which, in these places of Scripture, are written especially for our instruction, in few words ?

But while the sanctifying of the spirit, the purifying of the heart, the growing continually, and day by day, in righteousness of life, and godliness of conversation, the cultivating patience, meekness, gentleness, with such-like suffering and enduring virtues, the cherishing, in the inner man, of a living faith, of hope which maketh not ashamed, and of that charity

which never faileth, — while these, severally and collectively, form the personal graces and attainments, to which, as the root and ground, the source and spring, the foundation and the key-stone of all ministerial usefulness and duty, — Saint Paul, in his whole teaching and example, and peculiarly in the compendious admonition before us to universal watchfulness, calls and conducts his fellow-labourer in the Gospel vineyard, — still, proficiency in all these things, however chief and essential (and the chief and great essential unquestionably it is) forms but a part of that personal institution of the christian minister, to the guarding, confirming, and perfecting of which, the apostolic precept ‘ Watch thou in all things ’ is directed. In the same context where we find Saint Paul, with the whole weight both of apostolical authority and of fatherly persuasion, urging on his disciple the careful, cordial, continual cultivation of the entire sum of those catholic virtues, — in this very context, we find him inculcating, by the same authority and persuasion, the distinct obligations, to give attendance to doctrine, and to reading : a charge which, delivered in such times, and to such a minister, carries in it more than volumes for the establishment of the principle, that knowledge, large and well-digested knowledge, is indispensable, to our full and effectual discharge

of the ministerial trust. For let us but consider the times in which the apostolic precept in question was delivered, — times, in which the gifts of tongues, of miracles, of prophecy, of interpretative skill, of knowledge, abounded in the churches: let us consider, again, the minister for whose instruction this precept was, in the first instance, framed — Timothy, the pupil of the chief of the Apostles, who, from a child, had been trained, after the accurate method of the Jews' religion, in the science of the holy Scriptures, who had studied in the school of experience, under the first of masters, all that related to the practice of the christian ministry, on a scale unparalleled in after times; let us but consider that this was the individual to whom, after years sedulously employed, not in the preparatory studies merely, but in the active personal exercise of the pastoral office, the apostolic counsel we refer to is addressed: let us consider these things with the attention they so seriously demand, — and let us then ask our consciences and our hearts, whether any measure of proficiency in the science of sound scriptural interpretation, and in the collateral studies indispensable for the sound interpretation of Scripture, — whether any multiplicity of attainments in sober, liberal, well-digested knowledge in its various branches, — in morals, in theology, in

literature at large, can be more than requisite, for the necessities of the christian ministry in this our day ?

Having thus laid down, under his first head of exhortation, the only true groundwork of ministerial usefulness, namely, christian watchfulness, together with its natural consequences and fruits, sanctity of heart and life, united with, and cherished by, solid professional attainments, — the Apostle proceeds, in just sequence, to impress a further duty of the pastoral office, to the sharpest exercise of which Timothy, he foresaw, was presently to be called, namely, the bearing with prompt and cheerful resignation, for God's appointed time, a state of suffering and trial.

II. "Endure afflictions." For the observance, in the day of trial, of this branch of duty, Saint Paul knew, by good experience, how sufficient a preparative his disciple would secure, in the due and faithful observance of his preceding admonition. Timothy was already encompassed on every side by difficulties and dangers ; closed in, on the one hand, by the malignant enemies of the Gospel, beset, on the other, by deceivers professing themselves its friends : presently also he was to be bereft of his Father in Christ, and left to encounter fresh and fiercer adversaries, unfriended and alone. But of what account these entanglements, or this destitution ? When

provided with the spirit of christian watchfulness for his sword, and with the fruits of christian watchfulness for his shield and buckler, he should be found, at all points, armed — ready to withstand on the evil day, and having done all (all that became a soldier and servant of Christ Jesus — all that belonged to his baptismal covenant, and sacramental vow) to stand.

The counsel of the Apostle to Timothy on this head, was written, we know, at a season of present or approaching troubles in the church of Ephesus; — and, in its after application, is manifestly designed, in the first place, for the instruction of the christian ministry, in a perplexed, or persecuted state of the Church. Its application, however, is by no means restricted to times of persecution. At every time, in every season, it is of the highest moment to christianity, that the ministers of Christ be found proficient, in this branch of the character of their crucified Lord. This proficiency is most needful to secure to us, amidst the trials of the world, that inward peace, which can alone enable us, at all times, to fulfil the duties of our calling. It is indispensable also for the example of others. What balm of consolation can he administer to his brethren in affliction, who, in the daily intercourse of life, proves that he himself knows not how to endure? If, by the provi-



dent care of a wise and merciful hand, the severer schools of christian discipline be closed for a season, the ordinary chances and changes of life will still supply ample materials, for the proof and exercise of this branch of our confession; and, amidst present or impending crosses and calamities, when it pleaseth Almighty God so to visit him, whether in his person, in his family, amongst his flock, or in the necessary intercourse with his fellow-men, the faithful minister should ever be prepared to experience within, and to evidence around him, that he has learned to endure afflictions with a cheerful and quiet mind.

The subject-matter of the Text, has now, however imperfectly, been opened, so far as it respects that preparation of the heart and of the mind, of the intellectual and of the inner man, from whence, as from its native source and spring, all ministerial usefulness must flow. It remains briefly to consider those instructions respecting the practice and fulfilment of the work of the ministry, which are conveyed in the concluding members.

III. The charge to Timothy next in order is, "Do the work of an Evangelist." A principal part of what the Apostle here intends, may be collected from his own authority and example, in a place of Scripture which bears very remarkably on the present subject, — his parting address to the Elders of the church of Ephesus,

at Miletus. In this discourse, Saint Paul not only teaches the duties of the Evangelist's office, but also *how* those duties were, by himself, exemplified, in that Church, over which he to whom the charge now in question is addressed, was the appointed head. The holy Apostle here reminds the Elders of Ephesus, how, for the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears; how he kept back nothing that was profitable for them, but taught them, both publicly, and from house to house. What a commentary on the precept 'Do the work of an Evangelist,' must not this bright example have placed before the pastor of the Ephesian church? *He*, whose apostolical commission, to Jew and Gentile, was limited only by the limits of the world; whose message was for salvation unto the ends of the earth; on whom devolved the daily care of all the Churches; — this man it was, who yet discharged, in the city of Ephesus, with painful solicitude, by night and by day, all the duties, public and private, of 'The pastoral care;' who now proclaimed Christ Jesus in the great congregation, — now preached this name by the bed of sickness, in the still small voice of peace and consolation, blended with healing counsel and reproof; who consoled the afflicted, strengthened the faint-hearted, upheld the weak;

who remembered continually the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, (the only traditional saying recorded of our Lord, and preserved to us, it will be remembered, by Saint Paul alone) "It is more blessed to give than to receive." What a comment on his master's lessons, must not this example have placed before Saint Timothy? And what an exposition of that saying of the holy Apostle, "Do the work of an Evangelist," ought not this example, my reverend brethren, to be unto us this day?

It will not, I am sure, be questioned, that to do the work of an Evangelist after the model of Saint Paul, implies unspeakably more than can be effected by mere outward diligence and activity. Mere professional diligence, however unremitting, and though it proceeds even from a conscientious sense of duty, may, nay rather must, miserably fail, unless it be accompanied by what alone can make clerical activity respectable, unaffected gravity and sobriety of mind. This, accordingly, Saint Paul enumerates amongst the indispensable requisites for the priestly office. The ministers of Christ, according to his unexceptionable authority, were to be sober, grave, temperate; to possess, that is, not a mere formal gravity of manners, — but gravity of deportment flowing from sobriety within; for then only is a grave demeanour worthy or becoming, when it is the genuine offspring of a sober mind: a

requisite this last, which can in no way be arrived at, otherwise than by the cordial personal and experimental acquaintance already treated of, with the nature and the dignity of that holy religion, whose members and appointed ministers we are.

I do not stay to observe, how wholly inconsistent with such a spirit, are frivolous amusements \*, trivial occupations, carking attention to secular interests and pursuits. For what fellowship hath a grave demeanour with a trifling life? What concord or consistency can there be, between christian sobriety in the minister, and a selfish, secular, worldly-minded spirit in the man?

But however calculated to give effect to our ministry, is the union of gravity and sobermindedness with diligence and zeal, there is yet a further requisite, which Saint Paul, in this epistle, plainly includes within the work of the evangelist:—the faculty, namely, of blending, in the discharge of our various duties, whether of instruction, of counsel, of remonstrance, or of reproof, the voice of pastoral authority with the spirit of christian meekness; for while, on the one hand, we find the minister of Christ, com-

\* The admonition upon this head, in the Charge of our revered diocesan, cannot be more forcibly illustrated, than in the words of a departed light of the united Church.—See note at the end.

manded to ‘reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all authority’ as well as ‘with all long-suffering and doctrine,’ on the other hand, ‘The servant of the Lord,’ saith the Apostle, ‘must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves.’

The discriminating judgment exemplified by Saint Paul, in his varied wording, under differing circumstances, of the former of these precepts, claims our most serious study and imitation. In the case of the Ephesian christians, whose prevailing temptations arose from speculative error, he directs Timothy to reprove indeed, but ‘with all long suffering and doctrine:’ in the instance of the Cretans, on the contrary, where the besetting evil was gross practical immorality, he commands Titus ‘to reprove and exhort with all authority,’ — ‘to rebuke them sharply\*, that they may be sound in the faith.’

Would we, my reverend brethren, profit as we ought by these apostolical instructions, we must study to acquire and exercise a like wise discrimination, in the guidance of our respective flocks: so rightly dividing the word of truth, that there may be no room left, either for error in doctrine, or for viciousness of life.

What has been attempted under this head, is

\* ἀποτίμω.

but a short and slight summary of the task enjoined in the apostolic precept,—“ Do the work of an Evangelist.” Pregnant, however, as this precept is, Saint Paul, who assuredly was no waster of words, subjoins, it is remarkable, a further admonition.

IV. “ Make full proof of thy ministry.” Wherefore is this precept added, where the instruction given was already so full? It is added to the intent that, with the christian minister, no way of escape may be left, for the unwittingly deceiving of his own soul. This closing admonition is, in fact, nothing more, than the application to the present subject of that principle of our Lord, ‘ The tree is known by his fruits.’ So far, indeed, as what is outward in the work of the evangelist, is prompted and regulated by the pure heart, the single eye, a lively faith, a fervent zeal, all is, and must be, well. But the outward acts of man, however seemly, are a most uncertain index to the inward motive. A natural activity of mind, with an honest desire to eat not the bread of idleness, may too easily be mistaken by the minister of Christ, for christian diligence in the performance of the duties of his office. Again, an easy, good-natured temper, will go far to deceive others and ourselves into the belief, that our ministry is conducted in the genuine spirit of christian meekness. These, with all such-

like grounds of self-deception, are provided against, and probed unto the quick, by that concluding admonition of the holy Apostle, — “Make full proof of thy ministry.”

The proof which the Apostle had here ultimately in his view, can in no wise be mistaken, when we reflect by whom, and where it is written, that ‘out of faith unfeigned, of a good conscience, and of a pure heart, the end of the commandment is *love*.’

Has the minister of Christ the genuine spirit of love, towards the Father of mercies and his fellow-men, rooted and grounded in his own heart, this spirit will infallibly diffuse itself around him; will lodge, and take deep root, and bear its heavenly fruits upwards, in the souls of many from among the flock committed to his charge. Is he, on the contrary, destitute of the spirit of love? however active his exertions, and busy his demeanour, the scantiness of the harvest will as infallibly betray that unfaithful servant. — The prophets of Baal cried aloud for the fire from heaven, from the morning even until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was neither voice, nor any that heard, nor any that regarded. And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah, the prophet, came near, and prayed. Then the fire of the Lord fell; and consumed, not the wood only and the burnt-

sacrifice, but the dust, the water, and the stones !

May each individual member of Christ's ministry here present, by the grace of God be enabled thus to accomplish the apostolical injunctions of the Text,—not only enkindling and cherishing the flame of a cheerful, animating, lasting piety, with living fire from the altar of his own heart, in minds already prepared for the reception of those principles of life and godliness, with which it is our ordained office to feed the flock of Christ ; but softening, also, even the hearts of stone, until they become transformed into hearts of flesh ; until they, together with the souls and bodies of the faithful of our congregations, be offered up a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto the Lord our God !

That we may find our labours blest with this happiest consummation, there is one — it is the only way,—that we draw nigh unto our work in the same spirit, in which the Prophet of old drew nigh unto the altar,—the spirit of prayer. Continuing instant in this spirit, following in the footsteps of Saint Timothy, and of Saint Paul, may we, after the example of these wise master builders, so labour, and so live, that we may meet with mutual rejoicing in that glorious day, when “ They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”



## NOTE.

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### *Frivolous Amusements.*

MY last subject, on which I will detain you but for a few moments, is the question of *allowable clerical recreations*. Constituted as our nature is, it is necessary, that, when fatigued and exhausted by exertions bodily or mental, we should recruit ourselves by some innocent amusement. But the choice of recreation is a far more important matter than the world is commonly aware of; and, in the first place, on this account, that our chosen amusements serve at once to indicate, and to confirm, the dispositions and character of the man. In what is commonly called the business of life, we are, to a considerable degree, involuntary agents; our occupations are determined for us; and, if we would succeed in our various professions, those occupations we must sedulously pursue. But recreations are purely matter of choice; in this particular, we are entirely at our own disposal; and whoever wishes to estimate the temper and turn, of the mind of any individual, will do well to inquire, not how he passes his hours of business, but how he spends his intervals of leisure. This important principle, clergymen, above all others, ought to have habitually in view: and this matter will, perhaps, afford a good criterion by which they may judge of their moral and spiritual state. For, if their chosen amusements be, on the one hand, coarse and boisterous, or, on the other, frivolous and trifling, they will have but too much reason to suspect themselves; and to scrutinize narrowly

the thoughts, the intents, and the desires, of their own minds and hearts.

Respecting the amusements of clergymen, our Church, in the forty-second Irish Canon, lays down a rule, very distinct and important in itself; and which contains within it, express provision for a yet more extended application of its principle. By this Canon it is enjoined, upon all ecclesiastical persons, that they ‘shall not spend their time idly by day or by night; nor shall give themselves to playing at dice, cards, or tables, or any other game unbecoming their functions; always doing things which shall appertain to honesty, and endeavouring to profit the Church of God; — having always in mind, that they ought to excel others in purity of life, and should be examples to the people to live well and Christianly.’ Now, this part of the Canon, being founded on reasons of immutable morality, is, therefore, of perpetual obligation; and it is my hope and my desire, that the clergy of this diocese may conform themselves not merely to the letter, but to the spirit of it; and that, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

To speak my sentiments plainly, (for in all my intercourse with you I shall be plain and simple,) I do not see how a clergyman, consistently with the sacredness and separation of his character and office, consistently with the edification of the flock committed to his charge, or consistently with the vows which he has made at his ordination, can pursue the sports of the mountain or the field; can resort to the race-ground or the theatre; can be found at the card-table, or in the ball-room. In avowing these sentiments, I avow the sentiments, which, from the earliest ages of the Church, have been maintained alike by the old Catholic Bishops and Fathers,

and by the most distinguished and illustrious Churchmen of modern times. In these sentiments I have lived; in these sentiments I hope to die; and, at the close of life, it will be to me a crown of rejoicing, if, through my humble instrumentality, any of you, my Reverend Brethren, shall be induced to become like-minded; and to consider, even in their most unguarded hours, what gravity and recollectedness, are, at all times, and in all places, demanded of our sacred order.

But let me not here be misapprehended: — Christianity is a religion not only of *peace*, but of *joy*; and a faithful minister of Christ, ought to be the happiest and the most cheerful of human beings. He is not precluded, he ought not to preclude himself, from indulging at proper seasons, an innocent gaiety of heart: and by showing himself at home and at ease in the ordinary intercourse of life, he may and ought to recommend religion to the adoption of his fellow-men. Nor is he circumscribed in the choice of safe, and even profitable amusements. The delights of social intercourse, the creative wonders of the pencil, the moral inspiration of the poet, and that voice of melody which transports the spirit from the visible to the invisible world, — these are all within his range; and these may all be made subservient to the highest duties of his calling. But, on this subject, I cannot more properly express myself, than in the words of a prelate, venerated and venerable through a long and useful life; and who, being dead, yet speaketh, in his instructive and edifying works. ‘Christianity, though it forbids excess in our pleasures, yet multiplies the number of them; and disposes the mind to receive entertainment from a variety of objects and pursuits, which to the gay part of mankind are absolutely flat and insipid. To a body in perfect health,

the plainest food is relishing, and to a soul rightly harmonized by religion, every thing affords delight. Rural retirement, domestic tranquillity, friendly conversation, literary pursuits, philosophical inquiries, works of genius and imagination ; nay, even the silent beauties of unadorned nature, a bright day, a still evening, a starry hemisphere, are sources of unadulterated pleasure, to those whose taste is not vitiated by criminal indulgencies, or debased by trifling ones. And when from these you rise to the still more rational and manly delights of virtue ; to that self-congratulation which springs up in the soul, from the consciousness of having used your best endeavours to act up to the precepts of the Gospel ; of having done your utmost, with the help of divine Grace, to correct your infirmities, to subdue your passions, to improve your understandings, to exalt and purify your affections, to promote the welfare of all within your reach, to love and obey your Maker and your Redeemer,—then is human happiness wound up to its utmost pitch ; and this world has no higher gratifications to give.”\* See Bishop Jebb’s Primary Charge. Practical Theology, Vol. I. p. 391.

\* Bishop Porteus. Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon. xiv. p. 344.

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A  
**SERMON,**

PREACHED

**On the First Anniversary**

OF THE

**NANTWICH TEMPERANCE SOCIETY,**

*On Monday, the 7th of September, 1835,*

**In the Parish Church of Nantwich,**

BY THE

**REV. RICHARD HENRY GRETTON, A. M.**

**RECTOR;**

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**1836.**



## SERMON.

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1st. CORINTHIANS, ix. 25.

*“ Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”*

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I KNOW no portion of the Scriptures that affords so large a fund of edifying matter, for a congregation like my present, as the Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

The parallel between the reasoning, which the Holy Spirit dictated to the mind of this



Apostle, as necessary to preserve his converts in the faith of Christ, and the points upon which a Christian Minister would on this day desire to reason with you, is very striking: and I turn, without hesitation, to his pages of eloquence and truth for guidance in the work I have undertaken for you.

The Corinthian Church was to be built up in the faith and practice of the Gospel, under circumstances, humanly speaking, most unpromising. The unconverted people of that city were eminently learned, after the rudiments of the world; they revelled in luxury and riches, they were beyond all others in the arts and refinements of a polished—the profligacy and debauchery of a sensual life. Amidst the enticing blandishments of these carnal delights, it would naturally be difficult to enforce the Christian requirements of temperance, and self-denial, and self-mortification; it would be difficult for those who were, as yet, but “babes in Christ,” to withstand the evil example of their heathen countrymen, *hacknied and hardened in sensuality and vice.*

For the guidance, therefore, and spiritual welfare of converts, thus surrounded with enormities, and exposed to danger, their great Christian Teacher must have been deeply solicitous. He had gleaned them, as it were, from among a harvest of corruption ; and, to purify them as sifted wheat, to preserve them for the heavenly garner, he laboured more abundantly than others, and strove, in the might and guidance of the Spirit, to do the work of an Evangelist, in this vineyard of his Lord. He put forth every argument, he urged every motive, he wielded every weapon with which the grace of God had so abundantly armed him, for the preservation of those, who, at his preaching, had come out, and were separate, from the common herd of Corinthian “fornicators, and idolators, and adulterers, and effeminate, and abusers of themselves with mankind, and thieves, and covetous men, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners ;” those, who were, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, washed from the stain of their former pollu-

tions; sanctified by the renewing of their minds by the Holy Ghost; and, as long as they stood stedfast in the faith, and turned not back unto their own wickedness, accounted just before God. Like his great Master and Lord had done before him—in the parable of the unjust steward—he stimulates them to perseverance; to take up their cross, and follow Christ, by setting forth the conduct of the mere worldly followers of Mammon, as an example for their imitation. He shows them how possible it is to practise that self-denial, which would adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour; and was necessary for the attainment of the glory which he had purchased for them in Heaven, by reminding them, that the Heathens who were around them, with no higher motive than love of the praise of men; with no more enduring object of pursuit than their applause—as fading nearly as the branch of pine, which crowned the victors—could, in the midst of their sinful and adulterous generation, abstain entirely from debauchery and drunkenness, could rigidly maintain tem-

perance in all things, and submit to most irksome and laborious exercise.

My brethren, the city and church of Corinth have passed away; ruins are scarcely left, where once were palaces; and Heathenism is triumphant where Christ was preached by Paul. But the word which Paul preached perished not with them; by God's good providence it has been preserved; and, as a portion of His revealed word, belongs unto us, and to our children for ever. But it has been preserved for our learning: that we, through patience and comfort of these Scriptures might have hope. To us then, they speak of striving; of striving for "the mastery:" of being temperate; of being "temperate in all things:" and they hold out to us, "the incorruptible crown;" "the crown of glory, that fadeth not away;" which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give unto all them that look for, and long for, and live for his appearing.

And strive we must, my brethren, if we would wish to enter in at the strait gate that leadeth unto life: and with all our striving, and

with all our helps in striving, hard would be the struggle, had we only our own frail and sinful flesh and blood to contend against; it would be hard to subdue *them* to the spirit, because we should find "a law in our members warring against the law of our mind," so that the good we would, we should not do; but the evil which we would not, that we should do. But we have, not only our own innate, and, perhaps, long encouraged evil propensities opposed to the eternal interests of our souls; but the malice and permitted power of Satan; and the example, and persuasion, and, what is harder to resist, the ridicule of wicked men, his slaves; all are arrayed against us. Seeking, therefore, seeking, with only half-determined will, to leave the broad way, whereon they would urge us to destruction, we are assured will never do: still less will seeking to do so, relying upon the strength of our own good resolutions, or our own sense of what is right, and proper, and decent, and expedient. No, my brethren, *we* too must strive, must make a vigorous effort to come out, and be

separate, in thought and conduct, from all the practical unbelievers that surround us. The *narrow way* which leadeth unto heaven must be won by violence ; by violence done to our worldly habits, and worldly mindedness ; and, if need be, by violence done to our worldly friendships and connections. And, if we hope to be received of the Lord, and counted of His fold, this we must do, not as if we were sufficient for these things ; but we must take to ourselves “the whole armour of God :” by His implored grace and strength we must fight the fight of faith. It is He alone that can enable us to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Repentance we must pray for, as a gift from Him. It is He alone that can make us a clean heart, and put a right spirit within us. The same Almighty Power, which saves from sin, must also sanctify unto life eternal. It is He that must work in us both to will and to do ; but through Him we can do all things ; and through Him we may keep under our bodies, and bring them into sub-

jection to the high and eternal interests of our souls ; through Him we may strive effectually and successfully against the corruptions of our fallen nature.

But then it is for “ the mastery ” we must strive. Christ “ gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from *all* iniquity ; ” and sin of no kind, and in no degree, must reign in our mortal bodies. Take not to yourselves, I entreat you, the notion, as idle, as it is impious, that you can safely parley with vice ; or that God will accept a divided service. Think not that you can serve God and Mammon : your Saviour says you cannot. And how can you willingly permit the seeds of sin to remain rooted and cherished in the heart, and pretend to give that heart to God ? The thing is impossible. Your whole heart’s service God requires of you ; and He never will endure that man should determine how large or small a portion of it he will render.

But the attempt, should you be mad enough to make it ; the attempt to indulge in what you falsely may consider the lesser violations

of your Christian duty, while, from whatever motive, you refrain from grosser sins, will be as destructive of your peace of mind here, as it surely will be of your salvation in the world of spirits. Our Apostle says, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." And assuredly that person *must* be miserable, even here, whose conduct is continually at variance with his knowledge of better things : whose conscience warns him of the dreadful consequences of sin ; but whose heart has never been brought, by Divine grace, to hate it, for its defiling nature, and heinousness in the sight of God.

Peace, such a man cannot know ; for peace to the soul, springs out of confidence towards God, and from the witness which the Spirit itself beareth with our spirit, that we are the children of God, His reconciled children in Christ Jesus, while we are led, in all things, by the Spirit of God. Whereas the double-minded man, stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart, is always *resisting* the Holy Ghost ; and, his heart condemning him ; and convincing him that God is greater than his



heart, and knoweth all things ; how can his days be peaceful and happy ?

Remember then, that, “ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point ; he is guilty of all.” In that one point he defies the sovereignty of the Omnipotent. And remember too, that, “ to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom ye obey : whether of sin, unto death ; or of obedience, unto righteousness.”

But how shall sinful man, with all his angry passions, unruly desires, and debasing lusts ; his own heart, meanwhile, “ deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; ” how shall he, in whom, though he be regenerate, “ this infection of nature doth remain ; ” so that “ the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; and these are ” to the very termination of his existence here, “ contrary the one to the other ; ” how shall he, — the Christian, — prepare himself to seek and use the all-sufficient power of God’s grace ; and strive against sin, and gain the mastery ? The Apostle informs us

in the text,—He is to be “temperate in all things.” *None* of the objects of sense, not even those, which, in themselves, and in their moderate use, are innocent, are to engross the Christian’s time and thoughts, or usurp that place in his heart, which should be given unto God. And, if, by unwarrantable indulgence, we permit them to do so, we shall soon cease to regard the greatness of our soul’s wants. The riches of God’s grace will no longer be the objects of our prayers ; we shall live entirely for this world ; “troubled about many things ;” the willing slaves of our sensual appetites : and, having sown only to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.

Intemperance in the use of any of those good things, which a bountiful Creator has given us richly to enjoy, involves a greater degree of sinfulness ; and more awful consequences, than we, in our self-complacency, and self-security, are willing to allow. A sin, more deadly even than ingratitude to God, has given it birth ; and that is, the sin of unbelief. For how can he believe in

the all-pure and holy God, as the Giver of the good things of this life, who, with their intemperate use, defiles the soul which that God has breathed within him? And, if this is true of all intemperance; if its invariable effect, is to destroy our faith, and estrange the soul entirely from God; how especially is it true of drunkenness!

I would that I could describe, in proper terms, that brutalizing sin! I would that what I shall say, might, through God's grace, induce all who hear me, as well as you who have renounced it, in that respect, at least, to go and sin no more!

What injury to man; what rebellion against God does it not prompt men to? It is the fuel that feeds into a flame the sparks of *every* evil inclination of the soul; until they blaze forth in daring, presumptuous, and resistless sins.

On the other hand, what kindly or social disposition of man's heart does it not uproot? what trace of God's image in the soul of man does it not obliterate? Of what good, or noble, or Christian, or hea-

venly quality of man's nature is not the drunkard the defacer and destroyer?

And such were some of you. But I pray, in the language of the Apostle, that, like the Corinthian Converts, you may be washed, that you may be sanctified, that you may be justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God!

Before I conclude, let me again advert to the text ; and set before you, in few words, the motive, and the end of your exertions in the cause of Temperance.

Remember then, that, if you would be taught by the Apostle, you will be temperate, not only in respect of drunkenness, but in all things ; not because temperance is the thing you have to strive for ; but because, without it, you will never be in a condition to strive for the mastery over evil of *any* kind, in the race that is set before you.

Therefore follow still the example of St. Paul ; and do not imagine, because you have become temperate in one particular, that you have already attained all that is

required of you as Christians ; either that you are already perfect : but, “ forgetting those things which are behind,” and of which you are now ashamed ; “ and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus : ” an incorruptible crown of glory, eternal in the Heavens !

THE END.

THE  
**LEAVEN OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH:**

A  
**SERMON**

PREACHED IN  
  
ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, READING,

MARCH XXIV, MDCCCXXVI,

BY  
  
THE REV. J. HITCHINGS, M. A.  
  
VICAR OF WARGRAVE, BERKS.

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MDCCCXXVI.



## SERMON.

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“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” MATTHEW, xiii. 33.

The chapter in which these words stand is distinguished, above all those of the Evangelist St. Matthew, by the prophecies it records relating to the future state of the Church of Christ. Those prophecies were uttered by our Blessed Lord in the form of parables greatly varied in their imagery, but each fitted to open to the eye of faith some \* “knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ;” each expressive of some feature in the future history of the Church of Christ. The sower going forth to sow,—the enemy mixing a false and spurious grain among the good seed,—the net that gathered of every kind,—the grain of mustard seed,—and this before us, the leaven hid in three measures of meal,—each of these parables is descriptive of much that has already taken place in the Church

\* Mat. xiii. 11.



of Christ, and they will remain, till the end of time, prophetic of its future history.

It is true, many pious persons have understood some of these parables, and especially this before us, in a less extensive sense; and have supposed them to embody forth the "growth in grace," the change of spiritual condition in individuals, rather than the progressive power of the gospel in different communities, or in the wide world. And certainly they are often applied, with great edification, in that more limited sense. Yet, as it would appear that the widest sense of the text before us is that which our "Teacher come from God" intended to convey to his hearers, and is that too which is most applicable to the occasion of this day's service, I would confine it to that sense in these few words of Christian counsel which I shall now humbly offer to you.

But, first, let us all unite in prayer to Him who can ordain strength out of the weakest efforts, that He will mercifully lead us all to true Christian Knowledge, and bless to us this present occasion of seeking it.

Unhappily, we cannot follow up the parable in its widest sense without finding ourselves on the ground of controversy and cavil. It has long been a practice with those who wish evil to the Church of Christ to speak disdainfully of the slow progress of its spiritual conquests, and

the small extent of its actual empire. "After a lapse of eighteen centuries," say they, "survey the globe, and see how large a part of it remains uninfluenced by Christianity. To many nations the very name of such a religion is unknown—to others it is known only as a by-word of disdain:—nay more, in nations and communities where it has been preached and professed, how little has it been able to change their general character and habits, and assimilate them to the doctrines it delivers:—how slightly do its principles imbue the laws of many a nominally Christian community:—how weak is its control over the transactions of common life:—and, if you come down to individuals, how rare is Christian knowledge among them; how rarer still is Christian faith:—how small is its actual influence over them:—how few tokens do they exhibit of a deep feeling of its value to themselves, or its importance to others,—how many of indifference to it altogether. Can this be the destined religion of the whole earth?"

Such allegations may be harshly made, yet they may be in substance true: and it was said by the wisest of men, \* "he that heareth reproof getteth understanding." Let us then consider candidly the reproof which I have referred to, and we shall perhaps find in it much wholesome, though bitter truth.

\* Prov. xv. 32.

We must admit it to be true, that many of the most populous regions of the world are still, as in the days of prophecy, covered with "gross darkness:" still \* "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" and superstition. We must admit it to be true that many societies nominally Christian are really, and by their own laws avowedly, under the influence of principles and practices little consistent with the pure and peaceful Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must admit,—nay, in our most solemn services, "we acknowledge and bewail the manifold sins and wickedness," "the negligences and ignorances" that beset us individually; causing failures in the most watchful, follies in the most wise, and covering over with transgressions, as with a cloud,† the whole aspect of nominally Christian life.

But admitting all this to be true, do we by our concession ‡ "make void the truth of the Gospel? God forbid: yea we establish" that truth. For, going with the Psalmist into the sanctuary of God, we understand these things, and are led by them to a conclusion the very reverse of that which the objector would draw. On referring to the Bible, we find that this, at first sight, strange and unsatisfactory condition of the world, in regard to the spread of the Gospel, is the very condition predicted in that

\* Ps. lxxiv. 20. † Is. xlv. 22. ‡ Rom. iii. 31.

Gospel: and that this troubled and doubtful aspect of things, arising from the operation of pure and heavenly truth upon a fallen but not forsaken world, was foreseen and foretold by its Divine Author when He gave it to mankind.

We are instructed, sometimes directly, sometimes, as in the chapter before us, by parables, that the cause of the Gospel is destined in the counsels of God, to maintain, for a period at least, an unaccomplished warfare against its adversaries; that its progress, though finally triumphant, may for a time be slow: not obedient to "observation" and calculation, like the mere work of man, but rather sustained and carried onward by a power \* "far above out of our sight."

There is not perhaps a more striking instance of a figurative statement of this truth than this in the text, where the doctrine of the Gospel is compared to leaven, as significant of its progressive diffusion through the world. As the leaven remains not inactive in the meal, but diffuses itself on all sides, until the whole mass is leavened, so has the Gospel already spread, and so, we may infer, will it progressively spread † "till the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ."

Such is the prophetic declaration made by our Blessed Lord under the form of this parable.

\* Ps. x. 5.

† Rev. xi. 15.

And, now, let any candid inquirer look back on the past history of the Gospel in the world, and he must admit the exact fitness of this Scriptural emblem to illustrate it; he must confess how perfectly it represents what has actually occurred. The hiding of the leaven implies the inconspicuous origin and early obscurity of the Gospel, when it was promulgated in a small town, in an obscure and remote province of the Roman empire. Its name was almost unknown, and, as soon as known, despised : its influence, when put forth, was passively resisted on every side ; and then, when it began to acquire strength, it had to encounter successive and unrelenting persecution from powerful foes, who, to human eyes, seemed able to extirpate it at once from the earth.

But still it lived and spread :—like the leaven, it progressively put forth its power and spread :—cities and provinces were leavened by it, and still it spread :—kingdoms and empires were leavened by it, and still it spread. In later ages, its course is directed wider westward. We read of the spirit of enterprize discovering a new half-the-world; of thirst for wealth leading some to the rich South, and religious persecution driving others to the forests of the North : but the eye of faith sees, in such events, the Providence of God carrying out His purpose of leavening with the Gospel so vast a portion of

the globe. It was not given to unbelievers to have part in this new-found child of creation. As civilization advances its frontier westward into the wilderness, it carries the Gospel thither. "The solitary place is made glad:" the cross of Christ is lifted up in the desert, "a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat."\* A Christian church is founded, and rapidly increases: and now the far-off European hears his own liturgies, and "the Lord's song in a strange land:" or receives from thence the pious works that edify him at home.

And even "the poor Indian," still the denizen of his primeval and patrimonial forest, feels in time the advancing leaven of the Gospel. To him also the Gospel has been carried out, with every prospect of a blessing on the work.†

Again, in the course of time, far distant islands are visited: but the mariner is soon followed by the missionary; and with the progress of discovery goes forth the changing and healthful leaven of the Gospel. "The sound of the church-going bell," deemed but a few years ago the most unfamiliar of all sounds in the islands of the South Pacific, has there been heard. Those words of holy David‡ "Thou shalt shew

\* Is. xxv. 4.

† See the fourth Report of a Society for converting and civilizing the Indians, printed at Toronto.

‡ Ps. lxxv. 5.

us wonderful things in Thy righteousness, O God of our salvation: Thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea," have already had a large and gracious fulfilment:—and, looking onward, we anticipate by faith the day, when not an island in the ocean, and not a community in the earth shall remain untouched and unleavened by the power of the Gospel. And though many ages have already passed away, and ages yet may pass by before this consummation of blessings shall be complete, yet shall we, the beings of a day, shall we rashly seek to \**"know the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power?"* In His hands †*"a thousand years are but as yesterday, and pass by as a watch in the night"* to us. Can the vast Providence of such a Being be scanned and comprehended by the creatures He has made? To admit such a thought were to incur the "presumptuous sin" condemned by the Most High in the fiftieth Psalm, "these things hast thou done, and I kept silence; and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Be ours rather the humility of the believing servant of God. Though he sees much in the prophetic declarations still unfulfilled, yet his faith fails not: he knows that the

\* Acts i. 7.

† Ps. xc. 4.

word is true, though the time appointed may be long and yet distant: he reads that the word has gone forth, that \* "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," and he delights to trace the progressive events that are leading onward to its fulfilment. † "Though it tarry," he is content "to wait for it;" knowing that in the end "it will surely come," and satisfied if he sees the tokens of its approach, and glad and thankful if any efforts of his may be made the humble but honoured means of hastening that day,

"When earth's remotest nation  
"Shall own Messiah's name."

Here then, I would say, is our answer to him, who, whether in the spirit of sincere inquiry after truth, or, the evil heart of unbelief ‡ "asketh of us," in respect to this matter, "a reason of the hope that is in us," and questions its grounds. He alledges the imperfect spread of Christian truth: we acknowledge it, and reply that the Bible expressly avows that the diffusion of that truth shall be progressive, and that, if progressive, it must, for a season at least, wear the aspect of incompleteness and imperfection. We bid him look, not to what remains undone, but what has been done: we bid him look to the history of the Church of Christ during the last fifty years, and to its present state, and then say

\* Ps. xcvi. 3.    † Hab. ii. 3.    ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 15.



whether, with tokens of its progressive extension on every side, he is entitled to impugn the power or the good pleasure of its Divine Author to extend it more widely or more rapidly?—For ourselves, it is enough to know that it is advancing: and objections founded on its imperfect advancement only send us to an argument which, while it refutes the objector, may well comfort the believer. For he may with reason say,—“had the Bible held a different language,—had we been told that the promulgation of the Gospel would be followed at once by the universal acceptance of it,—or, at least, that the word, once preached to any people, would have free and fair course, unchecked by opposition, unchilled by indifference,—then, indeed, we might have been perplexed on comparing such bright promises of the dawn of revelation with its later and more darkened day. But, surveying the world as it is, and comparing what we see with what we read in the word of God and in the history of man, we find that so far from furnishing a ground of objection, it all affords a strong and striking proof of the certainty of that “sure word of prophecy,” which, sooner or later, will have its total and perfect fulfilment.”

But let us now view this question, not merely with the design of answering an objection on the part of others, but of seeking instruction for ourselves. We shall, I think, find it arise pre-

cisely in the order which our subject has already taken. We have been dwelling on objections to the limited spread of scriptural truth ; to its imperfect influence on those nations and communities who have received it ; and the want of earnestness and consistency in those who, as individuals, profess to walk by it. Let us refer to each of these points, with the view to draw from it whatever practical lesson of duty it may seem to suggest.

In the first place, as to the limited spread of religious truth, that lesson of duty is clear. God, from the first promulgation of the Gospel, ordained that its diffusion should be progressive ; and that human labours, undertaken and carried on in the sole dependance on His blessing for an increase, should be the means by which that diffusion should take place. Hence arises a specific class of duties, demanding that we share those labours, and contribute our efforts, according to our power, \* “ to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery ” to other lands.

It will not surely be asked perversely “ do you mean that every one is called upon to forego his proper cares and private duties, and be in person an agent, in other lands, in promoting Christian Knowledge ? ” Nothing could be more visionary. The ordinances of God lead to no confusion in the relative duties of men. The

\* Col. i. 27.

duty in question may be done, and done consistently with the most sober-minded attention to our proper cares and private occupations. But it requires,—what all duty will be found to require—self-denial; the self-denial that sets aside some portion of its worldly means, as consecrated to the high purpose of sending into other lands the blessing of Christian Knowledge.

And if this be conceded,—if there be the conviction that something should be done in this department of duty,—“if there be first the willing mind,” then, an advocate for the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge may regard the door as open for him, and, on its behalf, may say “here is your almoner, ready to receive your Christian liberality, and to dispense it faithfully.”

Although, however, I humbly and thankfully endeavour to fill that office to-day, I yet feel restrained from entering on the vast field which a remembrance of the labours of this Society in foreign lands must ever call to mind. The immediate object too, for which I would especially plead, is more limited in its range.—But, oh! what heart, that loves the cause of Christ, can pass over in silence and without emotion the history of the foreign labours of this Society? If we take but one department, the East, how great, how well directed and how blessed have its labours been! how dear, in after ages,

may be the memory of its faithful labourers! for, without question, the most distinguished servants of God in the East, of later times, and the most important advances of the great work of promoting the cause of Christ there, have been connected with this Society. Some of us here are old enough to remember with interest the ecclesiastical events of four and twenty years ago. They will remember the deep and fearful anxiety with which the believing servants of God, in this country, then turned to that quarter of the world, unblessed as it was with any but the most scanty and insufficient spiritual ministrations, and even those, repressed and impeded by a civil power that seemed to fill up the picture of mixed encouragement and difficulty presented to us by St. Paul in those striking words: \**“a great and effectual door is opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”* Those adversaries,—with shame it will ever be written,—were of our own brethren. Abroad and at home the carnal mind put forth its enmity against God, and the things of God. Pride that would not condescend to learn, prejudice that would not listen, intolerance of truth assuming the name of liberality of sentiment, alarm for worldly loss, jealousy of religious influence, and indifference that “cared for none of these things,”—these were all arrayed against that great

\* 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

measure on which,\* in a critical moment, the cause of the Gospel in the East seemed to human eyes to depend. And what withstood that they did not prevail? The power of †“Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” ‡“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise for thy loving mercy and for thy truth’s sake” that “the heathen” should no more have cause to say, “where is now their God?”—But the human agency which, at that crisis, seems to have been the honoured instrument of opposing evil and implanting good was this pious Society. It was, at least, the foremost in the struggle: it pleaded, through its friends, with the legislature; it besought, through our first prelate, the government; it prayed to Him §“who is the head over all things to the church;” and it prevailed: the church in India received the benefit of Episcopal superintendence: and from that hour it has owed a debt of gratitude to this Society, which all its prelates have been anxious to avow. From him who bore the early and more arduous part of the labours, and him who, as he went forth, beloved almost beyond the lot of man, declared in his last public words “that his last hope was to become the chief Missionary of this Society to the East,” through the line of those other two devoted servants of

\* The renewal of the E. I. Company’s Charter, in 1813.

† Eph. i. 11.

‡ Ps. cxxv. 1, 2.

§ Eph. i. 22.

God who followed, down to him who—we trust—still lives to labour, and \* “to take care of the Church of God,”—all have acknowledged the deep obligations of the Christian Church in India, to the godly zeal, the abounding liberality, the brotherly love, and the prayers of this venerable Society. And abundant fruits of that zeal and love have been already gathered, in an increase in all the general benefits of an established Church; in the unity of its labours, and the order and the increasing number of its labourers; in its influence on the European, the native Christian, and even the idolatrous heathen. Indeed public documents and private communications concur in testifying the moral change that has taken place in the aspect of British India, since the completion of the great measure for which this Society so earnestly laboured and prayed. They tell us that the Eastern images of “the wilderness” and “the garden” are not too strong to paint the changed condition of that Eastern Church: and that the European population, instead of being the scorn of the indolent and bigotted Hindoo, as a people without a religion, † “so have their conversation among the Gentiles, that whereas they once spoke against them as evil doers, they may now by their good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation,” whenever in the

\* 1 Tim. iii. 5.

† 1 Pet. ii. 12.

counsels of God that day may come. I pass unwillingly without dwelling on the many Christian institutions in India which this Society has either established or largely and repeatedly contributed to ; every Annual Report gives ample proof of its varied and extensive usefulness. And for testimony to the exertions of the Society in other quarters of the globe, and especially its promptness to follow, with Christian circumspection and zeal, that changeful state of things which marks these times, I would only refer you to the last Report, where you will read among other grants of money, these :

For the religious instruction of the emancipated  
Negroes in the West India Islands   £10,000

For promoting the religious instruction of the  
people in New South Wales           £3,000

But I quit this topic, and turn to trace the second lesson of practical duty arising from this subject, and especially with reference to the objection I have spoken of. That objection was founded on the partial and imperfect influence of Christian principles on states and communities nominally Christian. It is a subject of melancholy reflection, that where the Gospel has been preached and professed it should yet have so little apparent effect on the general aspect of life. We see states, like our own, publicly professing Christianity ; but what are the principles, on which they and we publicly act ? Those of ambition, present interest, false honour,

rather than true Christian principle. That evil, however, is one which we may lament, without the power to redress : but there are others more within our control, by the correction of which we may be enabled to do much in bringing to nought the argument founded on the imperfect influence of Christianity on communities professing to embrace it. In that work, however, of social correction of evil, and implanting good, I speak not of the labours of the \* “ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,” but of those lighter labours, in which all the members of a Christian community may bear, and consequently ought to bear a part. The evil, for instance, of ignorance in spiritual things may, under God’s enlightening Spirit, be remedied by early Christian education, and by supplying to the opened mind the books it needs for its continual increase in Christian knowledge. The evil of ungodliness may, so far as human efforts avail, be checked by social offices of Christian help and kind counsel ; by distributing, not at random, or with indiscriminate profusion, but discreetly and with personal care, such pious writings as are adapted to the age, the condition, and the spiritual wants of those to whom we give them : above all, by aiding in the distribution of the Holy Scriptures themselves. And, brethren, where “the spirit of

\* 1 Cor. iv. 1.



Jesus Christ is," much of this will be done. That spirit is ever diffusive: no one who is touched by it can ever sit down and take his ease, satisfied with his own state, and careless about that of others. With the Psalmist, he will be anxious to \* "declare what God hath done for his soul." Philip will find out Nathaniel to tell him of Christ: and each sincere believer will give proof that he has † "passed from death unto life"—from an inert and lifeless state to one quickened, like the leavened meal, with a living principle,—“because he loves the brethren.” Wherever this takes place, nothing can prevail against it; for ‡ “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”—§ “Happy are the people who are in such a case!”

But where little or nothing of this is found,—where no Christian help and kind counsel is given,—where no sense of spiritual privileges and blessings is expressed, and no desire shewn to extend them to others, even of our friends,—where no true Christian sympathy is felt and shewn between the different classes of society,—where the higher, the middle classes, and the poor live indeed in the same town or neighbourhood, but are bound together by no ties of Christian brotherhood and confidence, and good offices,—shall we wonder if the real

\* Ps. lxvi. 16.

† 1 John, iv. 4.

‡ 1 John, iii. 14.

§ Ps. cxliv. 15.

state and the outward character of such a community are little accordant with the high and holy vocation with which it is called? In such a state of things, the leaven of Christian principle is obstructed by the inertness of the mass through which it has to move ; and crude, unleavened portions of a nominally Christian society present a spectacle of triumph to “the enemies of the cross of Christ,” and sorrow to the believer.

But, here again the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge offers its ministrations. To schools rising against difficulties in the less wealthy districts of the country,—to lending libraries designed to supply the want that follows education,—to pious individuals anxious but little able to supply the Book of God and the Prayer Book even to a soul hungering after them, or desirous of offering a word in due season to some poor wanderer from the fold of Christ,—to the dwellers in the abodes of want, disease, or crime—the workhouse, the hospital, and the prison—to all these this Society affords its timely aid. It sends its Bibles, its Books of Prayer, and its various publications often gratuitously, and always at a diminished and easy cost.

And I appeal to all here, who have been led by the Spirit of God to share in social labours of love, to testify to the help they have thus re-

ceived. If the objects of your care have been "sick and ye visited them, in prison and ye went unto them," if they were ignorant of spiritual truth and you read to them, and reasoned with them, I would ask, what Bibles, what Prayer Books, what works, what tracts you have most familiarly seen and used? I think I may venture to assume, at least making the trial over the course of some years past—for I will not speak slightly of the late efforts of other societies;—but, taking the test of years past, I think I may say that they have been those of this venerable and pious Society. If they have not been, I would freely ask, is there not reason to infer that the Society has not received that support, in this town, which its Christian character and usefulness deserve? And if it be so, how can I with sufficient earnestness entreat you to redcem the past!

Not that I suppose that to any here the merits of this Society have been wholly unknown: many are, I trust, already supporters of it; many others have probably given it their respect, and have intended from time to time to give it their aid. To such I would humbly say in Apostolic words: \* "herein I give my advice; for this is expedient for you,—that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have." And more especially

\* 2 Cor. viii. 10.

I would desire to recommend to the consideration and care of all, that branch of the general Society which is here under the direction of the District Committee.—It cannot be necessary to point out the benefit of local union as a means of strength ; nor do I now advert to it merely as a source of defensive strength against those who dissent from the doctrines or discipline of our beloved Church. Far be such an inauspicious topic from our thoughts on this day!—No, I speak of union as the means of that Christian communion for which our Blessed Saviour so earnestly prayed : \* “that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.” He who knew what is in man, was mindful of his individual weakness, and sent out even his few Apostles not singly but one with another. In truth, in nothing is it wise for man to attempt much alone ; we are, by the primal law of our nature, social and mutually dependent ; and in attempting religious good the Christian will be mindful of this law of his nature ; and will seek every social every local aid that it will supply. Such aid must be found more abundantly in towns than in the country ; and, oh, the blessing it is to the giver and the receiver ! the happiness of heart-felt communion arising from community of service in the cause of Christ ! the Christian friendships to which

\* John xvii. 21.

it leads! the solace of turning from the unsatisfactory concerns of busy life, and taking sweet counsel with a view to mutual comfort, and with the blessing of God, the religious welfare of others! Shall fellowship in the same worldly service or occupation, public or private, be held a tie sufficient to unite those engaged in it, and can "the very bond of peace and of all virtue" fail in power to bind together Christians in mutual kindness and mutual help to do the service of their common Lord?

With respect to other and more tangible advantages of district bodies, one is the means they afford of well administering the affairs, and attaining the objects of the general society. We can conceive nothing more perfect for the administration of such societies than a central council of pious and enlightened men to deliberate, direct, and control, with subordinate bodies, each attending to the local interests of the institution in different parts of the country, and all preserving an unity of practice and principle by constant reference to the parent council. Here are division of labour, unity of object and communion of Christian feeling and principle. The district departments are relieved from the weightier labours of the central council, while they share in the benefits resulting from them; and that, with all the facilities and convenience that experience may suggest. Their

part is to dispense those benefits to others, and in return, to assist in keeping up the means by which they may be perpetually supplied. As a practical proof of the good effect of district committees, I need only add that, since their establishment, the friends of the Society have increased seven-fold.

Such is this ancient Christian Institution, such its zealous usefulness in the pious work of leavening the world at large, and its several communities, with Christian doctrine. But, before I further urge its claims on our support, as its friends, I would crave permission to say one word in answer to an assertion made by those whom we may not reckon among that number. There are those who have asserted that the Church of England is indifferent, if not unfriendly to the cause of general education, whether begun by schools, or carried on subsequently by reading. They have vaunted the exertions of modern societies for general education and useful knowledge, as the first great effort for lifting up the moral and intellectual condition of the lower classes of our community. There can be no wish here to undervalue the good will or the exertions of others in this great cause : we would rather praise the Giver of all for every offering cast into the treasury of publick good, by whomsoever offered. Let none \**“boast of things without their measure.”*

\* 2 Cor. x. 13,

But, if it were needful for either to claim credit for leading the way to the general education of the middle and lower classes, the palm must be conceded to this ancient Society. Let others take to themselves the honour of having "been ready" for the last ten or twenty years to leaven the general mass of society with knowledge: but this Society can truly say, that she \**"was ready"* more than a century ago,—*"and her zeal hath provoked many."* For more than a century this was the only body of any public importance that upheld and maintained the cause of general education. In the honest confidence of the Apostle whose expressions I have used, we may truly say: †*"as the truth of Christ is in us, no man shall stop us of this boasting in the regions"* of Britain. But, ‡*"he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord:"* and §*"God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."*—This, we humbly trust, is our case. Whatever this Society has done, it has done to the glory of God, and not to the praise of men: whatever education it has contributed to give, it has been Christian education: whatever knowledge it has promoted, it has been Christian knowledge. This Society had from the first the sagacity to see the necessity of promoting knowledge in a community

\* 2 Cor. ix. 2.

† 2 Cor. xi. 10.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 17.

§ Gal. vi. 14.

such as ours : but it had too the wisdom,—\*“the wisdom that is from above,” to perceive that knowledge is worth nothing to a community, save as it renders man more virtuous in his generation, and more †“meet for an inheritance among the saints in light.” It remained for them of this proud and pretending, but, in truth, ‡“unlearned and unstable” age to make the error, as unphilosophical as it is irreligious, of supposing that mere intellectual culture, without religious, with scarce moral teaching, could make men virtuous citizens, or fit a never-dying soul for its eternal state. And if it be alleged, that, in carrying on its godly work, this Society has been, in past days, less effective than Christian zeal would desire, I would answer, “is there not a cause?” Can the stream flow fuller than its fountain and tributary channels supply?—But, if you, in this populous and powerful town, and others with like advantages, will give it your effectual aid, its course will resemble that of the fair and fertilizing river that flows near your walls, and, as it leaves them, flows on enriched by a large tributary stream. And of a blessing from the fountain of all good, “the well of living water,” we do not doubt. That blessing this Society never fails to seek by prayer, each day before it begins its ordinary councils : and it needs but that zealous co-operation which God, for our good, requires of us even in carrying on

D    \* James iii. 17.    † Col. i. 12.    ‡ 2 Peter iii. 16.



his own work, to render it the most efficient of those societies, whose object is to spread the knowledge of God, and extend the kingdom of His dear Son.

And is it a slight thing, brethren, to have the power of sharing in the promotion of that object? Is it a small matter that we, living in a remote place of the earth, and in the privacy of our own homes, may have the privilege of co-operating in this great work—at first sight beyond the power, beyond the instrumentality of man—of promoting Christian knowledge in all lands, and leavening with the doctrine of the blessed Gospel the country and community in which we dwell?—Is it a slight thing, that, through a blessing on your endeavours, there may hereafter stand up a fellow Christian, saved from infidelity and sin, who may call you blessed for the good you have been the means of doing to his soul?—O, how greatly shall we err, if, with such a privilege presented to us, we put it from us! how gracious an opportunity shall we lose if we fail this day to give to this cause, and give gladly, our tribute according to our power! how grievous will be our inconsistency, if, professing the religion of love ourselves, we are careless about extending it to others, and refuse to assist those engaged in that work. Brethren, let not that inconsistency be yours! do not listen to any pleas that may be rising in your hearts

to stay your hand. Those pleas are the voice of temptation. They will tell you of other calls and claims on your liberality; but what call, what claim in urgency can equal this? It is the call of Christ: \**“feed my sheep:”* it is the claim of God: †*“honour the Lord with thy substance.”* They will tell you of the insignificance of your efforts, when set against the mighty work before you. It was so with the disciples of old: *“what are they among so many!”* You will remember the occasion of that question; and you may remark that no specific answer to the objection was given by our Lord, but only the plain direction, *“give ye them to eat.”*—Say not then that your efforts are too small and inconsiderable to be of any avail: they may indeed be inconsiderable in appearance and in fact, and so were the *“five barley loaves and two small fishes,”* but they were made to feed five thousand persons; they may be small, and so is the grain of mustard seed, but under a genial sun it becomes the greatest among herbs: and so may a particle of leaven appear small and powerless but it is capable of diffusing itself, and wholly changing the character of the mass in which it mingles. Let us only begin with self-denial, and labour with earnestness, and rest in single-hearted dependance on God, and then doubt not that He will *“give the increase.”*

\* John xxi. 16.

† Prov. iii. 9.

Lastly, Christian Brethren, I would implore you to make personal as well as social application of what has been said. We are not met in this house of God merely to further the cause of a society, however excellent. We are met to worship God. Oh, may He who "worketh in us to will and to do," keep us mindful of this. May we remember that social and personal devotedness to Christ are inseparable. Our Lord's injunction was : \* "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Let every occasion on which we seek the one, turn our thoughts to the other. And, reversing for the present that injunction, while we are seeking to strengthen our brethren, let us pray for the sincere and perfect conversion of our own souls to Christ. For, shall a double inconsistency be found among us ? It is sufficiently sad that any should profess to love the cause of Christ, yet never seek to promote it among others : but still more strange and grievous were the inconsistency if, professing the desire of spreading the influence of Christian truth to others, we should be unmindful of it ourselves. You have already, it may be presumed, many of you, given a Bible, a Prayer Book, or a religious work to some poorer neighbour, or sent them to the benighted heathen. You have felt that you were bestowing a gift better than silver or gold,—the best

\* Luke xxii. 32.

you could bestow. And will you be satisfied with being the means of conveying to others a blessing of which you taste not yourselves? Will you be content to help others to pass over into the land of everlasting life, while you behold, between yourselves and that happy land, "a great gulph fixed?"—Will you be the mere transmitters of glad tidings to others—the mere reflectors of a light which leaves you, as it found you, cold and dark? Oh, may it not be so! May we pray earnestly to be kept from such a cheerless state! May \*"the spirit that quickeneth" fill us with the leaven of love to God and man: and may its changing and life-giving power be experienced by us more and more continually, till we be wholly leavened by it! Then shall each be enabled, on looking back upon our former state, to say, "this was I: thus inert, thus comparatively destitute of quickening grace myself, thus indifferent to the duty and the delight of being the means of communicating it to others. But "I thank God through Jesus Christ" for the change that has been thus wrought in me. May He go on to be gracious unto me, and having †"guided me by his counsel, afterwards receive me to glory"—through the mediation and atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord"!

\* John vi. 63.

† Ps. lxxiii. 24.

**BLACKWELL, PRINTER, LONDON STREET, READING.**

THE  
CHILDHOOD AND MANHOOD  
OF  
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE:  
A  
SERMON

PREACHED AT BROMLEY, KENT,

JULY X. MDCCCXXXVI.

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOLS  
ESTABLISHED THERE.

BY THE REV. JAMES HITCHINGS, A.M.  
VICAR OF WARGRAVE, BERKS.

READING:

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MDCCCXXXVI.



TO

JOHN WELLS, Esq.

OF BICKLEY PLACE, NEAR BROMLEY,

KENT,

THIS SERMON

IS INSCRIBED

IN TESTIMONY OF SINCERE RESPECT.

J. H.





## SERMON.

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Brethren, be not children in understanding : howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

1 CORINTHIANS XIV. 20.

In these words St. Paul enjoins on the Corinthian church two qualities in the Christian character ; and he expresses them by allusion to two different ages of our life—childhood and manhood. These qualities are, a disposition, as exempt as that of early childhood from what the Apostle calls “malice” ; and an understanding, full-grown and vigorous, like the maturity of manhood. “Brethren,” he says, “be not children in understanding : howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

Nor is this the only passage in which the same Apostle combines these two qualities, and urges them as essential parts of the Christian character. To the Roman Christians he says, “I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xvi. 19.

I need not here point out the propriety and beauty of these images of simple childhood and sager manhood, to illustrate the moral and intellectual qualities which the Apostle so earnestly enjoins ; but I would ask you to remark with me their peculiar propriety, as used by him. If the expressions of a writer or speaker acquire force from their known agreement with his personal character—these before us will become doubly forcible from the remembrance of whose words they are. If the requisition to be “a child in malice,” but “a man in understanding” would come well from one who was himself of a simple, guileless, and affectionate disposition, yet of a powerful and manly understanding—from whom, among the sons of men, could they have come better than from the Apostle Paul ? In the endowments of the understanding, where shall we find his superior ? In depth of thought, in sublimity of sentiment, in force of argument, in eloquence of expression—how few shall we find his equals ? How had the world, from age to age, admired and honoured the genius of Paul of Tarsus, had it not pleased God to lift him above the meaner distinctions of earthly eminence,—to consecrate his intellectual gifts to Himself, the giver,—to touch his lips with hallowed fire,—and send him forth, no longer Saul but Paul, through the whole civilized world—civi-

lized and enlightened in the arts of life, but dark and ignorant in vital knowledge—"to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God."<sup>b</sup>

And yet we find this powerful writer, this eloquent and touching speaker, this heaven-taught man, in some things a child: in those blemishes of the moral character, which, through the subtle power of evil, but too often mar and disgrace the highest natural gift of God to man, his understanding, we find St. Paul a very child. He had no admiration for them, he had no false toleration for them, he felt a child-like shame at even speaking of them, as he confesses to the Ephesians.<sup>c</sup> There was too, in this great Apostle's character, that tenderness, that depending affection, which we all feel to be one of the attaching graces of childhood. He lived among his friends—and they were all his friends who "who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity"<sup>d</sup>—as humbly and affectionately as if all his own happiness depended on their welfare. "Now," said he to the Thessalonians, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord"; "for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" "ye are our glory and joy."<sup>e</sup> He taught them, indeed, as one who had received his apostolic commission from

<sup>b</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

<sup>c</sup> Eph. v. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Eph. vi. 24.

<sup>e</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 8, and ii. 19, 20.

Jesus Christ, and was bound to execute it ; but he did it in the very spirit of kindness and humility. He taught them “in simplicity and godly sincerity,”<sup>f</sup> in simplicity of manner, in sincerity of heart, “not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.” He taught them even with tears of affectionate concern.<sup>g</sup> There is, indeed, nothing in personal records more touching than St. Paul’s own expression of his feelings of tenderness, when thinking of those to whom he was bound by no other tie than than that of concern for their spiritual welfare. Such was he—so eminent, yet so humble—who, in addressing a church, founded among a vain, conceited, and luxurious people, said, mildly but authoritatively, “Brethren, be not children in understanding : howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

But, let us look more attentively into the fuller import of these words before us ; and O may He, who can “give wisdom unto the simple,” and ordain strength out of weakness, lead us to a right and profitable understanding of them !

Let us then first inquire, what is this “malice,”

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. i. 12.

<sup>g</sup> It is the remark of one, never to be mentioned but with honour, that “as there is probably no character in history which exhibits more undaunted heroism than that of St. Paul, so there is perhaps not one whose tears are so frequently recorded.”—*Mrs. More’s Character and Writings of St Paul.*

in respect to which the Christian is bound to remain in a state of child-like ignorance and weakness? And what is this "understanding" in which he is under equal obligation to manifest all the energy and vigour that denote manliness of character, and befit the ripened powers of matured age?

With respect to the first of these questions, common usage has limited the sense we attach to the word "malice," and confined it to the disposition to wrong, or injure another by word or act; but as a scriptural term, it has a wider meaning, and is put generally for that natural, and, without Christ, fatal disposition to evil, from which it is the object of our daily prayer that we should be delivered. This is the "malice" in respect to which Christians are required to be as children: they must not practise it, they must not be familiar with it, they must not be conscious of it as an influencing principle within them.

It is remarkable that when another great Apostle, St. Peter, was pursuing the same line of exhortation with St. Paul, the same image of childhood occurred to him. In the second chapter of his first Epistle he says: "wherefore laying aside all *malice*, and all hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speaking, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word." To both

Apostles the same idea was familiar, for both had been taught of that Saviour who, when children were brought to him for his blessing, and "his disciples rebuked those that brought them," said "suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven,"<sup>b</sup>—of beings so simple and sincere, so guileless and humble-minded.

O sacred and blessed age! type of Gospel innocence and peace! emblem of that heavenly mindedness, whose inheritance is "the kingdom of heaven!" It was said by one of old, "the greatest reverence is due to childhood;" but how is that feeling enhanced when we view that age as expressive of that happy freedom from worldly taint, that gentleness, that holy simplicity of character which marks the true believer in Christ! How strongly are we bound, as his disciples, to regard that age with tender interest, and to succour it with our best efforts!

But He who required of his followers that they should be "harmless as doves," required also that they should be "wise as serpents;" and we find in our text that his Apostle, when he enjoins to the Corinthians this harmlessness of act and purpose, which could find its counterpart only in the bosom of a child, bids the same persons, and in the same sentence, "in

<sup>b</sup> Matt. xix. 14.

understanding be men." We thus trace, in this part of God's word, as in so many others, that close connexion which subsists in the Christian character, between our moral and our intellectual faculties. These are enlightened, those are purified by the Gospel; and between both, a beautiful uniformity is maintained. This connexion of the two leading principles of our nature, and the joint operation of divine grace upon both, forms one of the most striking proofs of the fitness of the Gospel plan of redemption to the actual wants of our being.

But, looking more closely into the Apostle's requisition, "in understanding be men," a verbal remark presents itself, which, setting forth, as it does, the force and exactness of the Apostle's manner of expression, deserves to be well considered. It is, that the 'word we render "men" is used, in its scriptural and general acceptation, to describe those who have attained to perfectness in any improveable qualification. The child who has grown up to full manhood, the scholar who has finished his preparatory studies, and is capable of teaching others, the soldier who has made himself master of the rudiments of his art, and is qualified to command—these would be all called by the same word that in the text is put "men." It denotes their



perfectness in their several qualities. They have sought instruction, have profited by it, and are now able to instruct others, as well as to enjoy the benefit of their own attainments. They are “men” in their several qualifications. It is the same word that St. Paul uses when, in addressing the Colossians, he speaks of the prayers that had been offered up for them “that they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”<sup>k</sup>

Giving then the due sense to the expression used by the Apostle, we are bound to receive it as a truth standing on his inspired authority, that something is wanting to the perfectness, the completeness of the Christian character in those who, bearing the name of Christians, are, in understanding, any thing less than “men.” And, I would humbly endeavour to shew the converse of that truth to be also true—namely that the religion of the Gospel is so much in harmony with our highest reason, that he who is really “a man in understanding” will embrace it. The connexion of these points with the object that is mingled with this day’s service will then, I trust, appear.

First, let me point out an apparent concurrence with respect to this subject, in persons seldom found to agree in opinion. The wise man of old,

<sup>k</sup> Col. iv. 12.

when he called upon his children to "hear the instructions of a father," opened those instructions with the declaration, "wisdom is the principal thing."<sup>1</sup> And doubtless, the wise men of the present day—"wise," I mean, "in their generation,"—would not refuse to repeat that declaration, and say, "wisdom is the principal thing." The Christian teacher too, when called upon for his testimony, fully joins in that declaration, and would add to it the Apostle's earnest injunction, "in understanding be men." Whence this seeming harmony of precept between persons of very different principles—the Jewish teacher, the advocate of worldly expediency, and the Christian minister? These all appear to concur in the declaration of the worth and dignity of our intellectual powers. They concur in the same declaration respecting them; but, do they concur in enforcing the same duties as resulting from it? By no means:—they have different objects in view; they urge different motives; they appeal to different sanctions. Their agreement is in the letter, not in the spirit of the precept that enjoins the exercise, and extols the dignity of the understanding.

On the case of the great Jewish moralist we need not now dwell. It would be beside our present purpose to inquire what was the mea-

<sup>1</sup> Prov. iv. 7.

sure of spiritual light vouchsafed to him, and to God's ancient people; and how far they advanced by the guidance of it. It is to the other and nearer question that I would beseech you to give attention, while I touch upon it in the course of our subject—namely, the comparison of that wisdom which the world's votary praises, with that which, after the Apostle, the Christian teacher advocates, while he bids his hearers “in understanding be men.” And on that question I would humbly but firmly repeat my conviction, that the Apostle's words may be followed out to the full extent of the assertion, that as the Gospel is supreme and perfect reason, he who is really “a man in understanding” and reason will embrace it.

There are two classes of persons in whose ears this assertion would sound strange. The first is composed of those who think manliness of understanding not inconsistent with moral delinquency; and who hold that, while the higher moral affections are corrupted and decay, the understanding may flourish with undiminished vigour. But, men and brethren, are these things so? Can it be said with truth, that the soundness and completeness of understanding which the Apostle illustrates by the image of manhood, is consistent with moral weakness and deficiency? Is there, then, no connexion

between the moral and intellectual parts of our nature? The Scripture holds a different language. The Saviour of mankind has said, "if any man will do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God":<sup>m</sup> if any man desires to practise moral obedience, he shall have a brighter mental illumination. And his Apostle has said, that it is one of the efforts of the power of evil to "blind the minds"—how expressive a term!—"to blind the minds of them that believe not." Experience too follows in the train of Scripture, and confirms its dictates. It shews us that every moral error spreads a film and mist over the understanding, and weakens its power. The perfection of the understanding consists in its reflecting distinctly, like pure and placid water, the images of truth presented to it; and every bad passion has a tendency to mar and ruffle that reflection. Voluptuousness dulls and enfeebles the mind, avarice contracts it, pride perverts it with false views, ambition irritates and over-excites it even to destruction. Such is the ordinance of God; and it would seem to shew clearly the connexion between the moral and intellectual parts of our nature.

But, at the same time, it may be often seen that in persons, in whom much of this moral

<sup>m</sup> John vii. 17.

mischief has taken place, much of the native power of mere talent may remain. The history of our own literature abounds with <sup>a</sup> instances of that showy brilliance of talent, which often

“ Leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind,”

being combined with great moral delinquency and degradation. But we were speaking, not of brilliancy of talent, but of strength of understanding. The former is, no doubt, a splendid gift; but, uncombined with moral excellence, it has often proved a splendid mischief. It has served to shew, by strong contrast, the difference between natural gifts and spiritual graces; and to prove, by a striking instance, that “ what is highly esteemed among men may be abomination in the sight of God.”<sup>o</sup> This is not, assuredly, that faculty to which the Apostle refers, when he bids us “ in understanding be men.” The latter belongs to a far higher power of the mind, and is itself more perfect, and more conducive to the welfare and dignity of man. It is that faculty which was desired by the wisest of them of old time, as God’s best gift: “ give thy servant an understanding heart !”<sup>p</sup>—it is that faculty which the Son of God addressed

<sup>a</sup> Might not even that highly gifted poet, who condensed the holy words of our text into his well-known line—

“ In wit a man, simplicity a child,”

be cited as one ?

<sup>o</sup> Luke xvi. 15.

<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings iii. 9.

himself to when, appearing to his disciples after his resurrection, "he opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures."<sup>4</sup> And so it is still: he who has "an understanding heart," he whose "understanding is opened," he who is "a man in understanding" will be the most willing, and the most able to receive the divine knowledge imparted in the Scriptures. The prophet Jeremiah was vouchsafed a clear perception of this truth when he uttered that high precept: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord."<sup>5</sup>

But there is also another class of persons who would object to the inference I have been endeavouring to draw from the words of St. Paul. It is composed of those, who have been used to make such unfounded distinctions between faith and reason, as though the one were necessarily at variance with the other. Such persons assume that, in receiving the Gospel, believers must abstain from the fair exercise of their understanding, and the free use of their reason, and, therefore, that they cannot be said in "understanding to be men." Such things

<sup>4</sup> Luke xxiv. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. ix. 23.

are sometimes said ; but they are said by those who misunderstand or misrepresent the truth of the case. For who shall truly say that the exercise of the understanding is restrained in sound religious inquiry, when he remembers the many and high subjects on which it may be fairly exercised ; when he considers that, on all points really within its cognizance, it may question freely, and search diligently whether these things are so ?

In examining and estimating the evidences on which the truth of revelation rests, the understanding finds her best and noblest exercise ; and, after those evidences have been examined, and the revelation they assert has been established, the understanding has still an important and lawful function, in ascertaining the nature of the specific truths and doctrines of that revelation ; and in tracing their suitableness to the necessities of man's condition, and to the promotion of his personal and social, his present and his eternal benefit. In that field—and it is an almost boundless one—reason may expatiate at large, without conflicting with faith. But if we go on to transgress its just limits,—if we pass on from what it is competent, to what it is incompetent to examine,—if, in the miserable affectation of mental strength and dignity, we seek to examine into “the secret things that

belong to God"—if we ask "how can these things be?"—"why was revelation delayed? why is it still incomplete?"—if such be the character of our inquiries, we carry them beyond all just and rational limit; we come into conflict with a higher power, and we bring disgrace on reason, and lay its honors in the dust. Such demands proceed from rashness, not reason: they are the bold challenge of presumptuous ignorance, not the calm pursuit of truth, under the guidance of an enlightened spirit of inquiry. In intellectual, as in civil matters, they are the worst enemies, or at least the most dangerous friends of freedom, who seek to overstrain its just boundaries.

This caution is the more necessary in days like these, when we hear so much of the power of knowledge, the necessity of strengthening our own understanding, and the duty of cultivating that of others. In such times it is especially needful to weigh well the injunction of the Apostle, "in understanding be men," and to ascertain its true import.

But in attempting to do this, I would desire to disclaim at once all wish to speak of our having "fallen on evil days" in this respect, or to utter one word in thankless disparagement of those mighty efforts in the cause of intellec-

\* Deut. xxix. 29.

† John iii. 9.



tual cultivation which have marked these times. Certainly they are times of anxiety and suspense to the thoughtful Christian, "looking after those things which are coming on the earth:"<sup>u</sup> yet, speaking as a humble minister of Christ, sharing that anxiety, I would disclaim the wish to go back one step in that course of intellectual advancement that has distinguished these latter years. On the contrary—if I might speak on aught so personal—I would say that among the few memorials of the past on which I can dwell with satisfaction, stands that of having been permitted to share in local efforts to extend the cause of education. And I believe that I speak the sentiments of the great body of persons, who, whether as individuals or as ministers, have been so engaged, when I say that notwithstanding great discouragements, (on which this is no time or place to dwell) far from them is the thought that would wrong the sacred cause of general education, or narrow the means by which it may be afforded. On the contrary, we would willingly go beyond all that has been done to advance the mental cultivation of every class among mankind. To those who are sitting in the darkness of ignorance, we would gladly cause the light of knowledge to shine forth ; on those with

<sup>u</sup> Luke xxi. 26.

whom the intellectual day is just dawning, we would willingly make it shine steadily and clearly. And the ground of our willingness is this :—we believe that the understanding, rightly instructed, and touched by divine grace, will be a handmaid to truth, and a conductor to bring men to that revelation that proceedeth from the God of truth. And if, in the hope of this blessed result, we have had some disappointment, arising from the influence of other causes, still we do not despair. We believe education, as the means of training the human character, to be not a mere invention of man, but an institution of God. We know, in fact, of no human means of so training the character without education. And if that precious gift has been abused, we do not, on that account, distrust its use. We trust that “times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord.”<sup>v</sup> We trust that the time will come when, throughout these lands, the now awakened powers of the understanding will be more reverently and devoutly turned to the Sun of Righteousness, and will rejoice in his light. We anticipate by faith the happier time when the prophetic Psalmist’s words will have a blessed, though it be still an imperfect accomplishment among ourselves; and “truth shall spring out

<sup>v</sup> Acts iii. 19.

of the earth, as righteousness hath looked down from heaven.”<sup>w</sup> Meanwhile, we hope and believe that revelation, the day-spring from on high, will be more highly prized and more diligently studied, in proportion as the means of attaining to the knowledge of truth are deepened and enlarged. Certain, at least, it would appear, that Christianity has no more bitter foe than ignorance. For, from ignorance springs prejudice: in prejudice the passions have their strongest bulwark; and from the passions, fostered and indulged, spring all those “fleshly lusts that war against the soul.”<sup>x</sup> There is a reciprocal action in these matters: ignorance engenders crime, and crime brutalizes the faculties, and perpetuates ignorance. The whole dispensation and plan of the Gospel will be better understood, and more willingly received, by a “wise and understanding people.” Every experienced minister of the Gospel knows that his great obstacle, so far as instruction in truths of vital importance is concerned, lies in the mass of ignorance and prejudice which stands as a barrier to the truths he would teach, and must be removed before he can advance to the essential parts of his work. We therefore wish to see intellectual culture, and, with ten-fold anxiety, sound Christian instruction spreading

<sup>w</sup> Psa. lxxv. 11.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 11.

itself wide and yet more widely: we believe inquiry into divine truth to be the highest exercise of the human faculties: and therefore we seek to improve the highest of those faculties with a view to that object. And this is, in truth, the great and ultimate object of all sound education in every rank of life. It is to call the reasoning powers into such exercise that they may be capable of receiving and understanding divine truth, and that so, "in understanding we may be men." It is not a mere readiness of reply to questions proposed, a mere knowledge of the theory or expertness in the practical uses of science, that is the highest object of education. These have, indeed, their relative value, and that value is unquestionably great; but their insufficiency and inferiority, in the scale of human attainments, is shewn from the fact, that they may be possessed in their fullest perfection by those who, for all the higher objects of education, are, in the Apostle's language, "children in understanding." And thus it would appear, that his full meaning when he bids us be "men in understanding" was that, while we should give all diligence to cultivate and improve that measure of capacity which God has given us, we should use it, not as an end, but as the means to a higher purpose;—as the means by which our thoughts may be lifted

up above the cares, the fears, the low pursuits, and debasing indulgences of this life, to those pure regions in which it is the privilege of cultivated reason to expatiate; following eternal truth upwards to the very throne of God, and downwards again to earth, as manifested in the glorious revelation of the everlasting Gospel. O, listen not to those who would tell you that there is nothing in knowledge but a deeper acquaintance with those arts by which the advantages of individual life, and the wealth of nations may be procured, and increased: that there is nothing in morals better than a low and selfish expediency; and nothing in religion higher than mere opinions which a man may embrace or reject at pleasure! Listen not to such false reasoners; but believe rather, that knowledge, morals, and religion, rightly understood, have in them the principles of eternal truth, and combine to advance one inconceivably great and glorious object—the honour of God in the real, the supreme, the everlasting good of man.

But, if this be true,—if the great end of all sound instruction be, to bring the creature to his Creator, to lift up the mind of man to the contemplation and comprehension of divine truth, how important must it be to keep that end clearly in view, and to make “the word of truth” the ground-work of all education. It is

from the want of steadily aiming at that end, or of using right means to attain it, that the great defects of our whole system of education have arisen. If the ground-work, the foundation of all our education, in every rank of life, were laid in the rock of eternal truth, and the superstructures carried on with a steady bearing upon "the chief corner-stone,"<sup>y</sup> then, however various in outward form they might be, each would be a "goodly building," and the whole would appear "as a city that is at unity with itself."<sup>z</sup>

Nor do we lack great encouragement to pursue this more spiritual system of education. One of the effects ascribed by the Psalmist to the word and law of God is that of "making wise the simple:"<sup>a</sup> an effect to which every experienced and attentive observer of the working of instruction upon the mind, may bear witness. We may see it in the case of mere children. Mark the difference, not only moral but intellectual, between a child whose education has been begun and carried on with constant reference to divine truth, and another trained, however carefully, in worldly knowledge, and you will see the effect the Psalmist spoke of: you will see that religious education, carefully and faithfully imparted, has a power to influence the mental as well as moral character of childhood,

<sup>y</sup> Eph. ii. 20.

<sup>z</sup> Psa. cxxii. 3.

<sup>a</sup> Psa. xix. 7.

to which no other kind of instruction can make pretension. Or, if we take the case of persons of any other and later age, where want of opportunity may have kept them in a state of ignorance and mental weakness, again and as plainly you will see the mighty power of scriptural instruction to make them men in understanding, as perhaps they already are in stature: you will see the justness of apprehension and the soundness of judgment which it imparts, and you will find a general proficiency of understanding which no other kind of instruction could have produced.

I do not seek to account for this on human, on merely natural principles; or I might endeavour to shew how the volume of the Holy Scriptures furnishes the materials by which the mind may be most fully exercised in all its operations. But we have higher and firmer ground to rest the question on. The scriptures are the eternal records of divine truth: they contain the laws of human life dictated by Him who gave it: they are the means specially appointed for our instruction and improvement, by Him who “knew what is in man.” What wonder then that they should be the most efficacious means of affecting and improving the heart, and the understanding,—making the faithful receivers of their precepts “in malice children,” but “in understanding men?”

Such an education it is the object of the schools established here to afford to the children of the poorer classes in the neighbourhood. Of their institution and history it becomes me to say little : I speak to those who are acquainted with both. Of their present state I learn, that they greatly need support. In that respect, they appear to have shared the common lot of such institutions. To be established with general approval and promises of support,—to be tended for a while with personal care and pecuniary contribution,—to be seen to perform well their functions,—to be then deemed independent of further succour,—to be thenceforward praised profusely, and supported sparingly, and to become the general receivers of ineffectual good wishes and intentions,—such is the general lot of these institutions. Nor does it end here. There is a perverse ingenuity of our nature, by which we are led to justify a fault we cannot deny : and thus, neglect begun from inadvertence, is often continued deliberately and on system.

If, in thus stating what I have seen elsewhere, I have described what has occurred here, you will, I trust, count it a happy occasion, that, in this house of God, you have been now reminded of an implied pledge, and an unquestionable duty to God and man. “ And, herein I give my



advice for this is expedient for you ;”<sup>b</sup> “and, I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.”<sup>c</sup> Redeem the past. Place these schools, by your donations this day, in a condition beyond the reach of present need, and sustain them there by annual contributions. It was no less a man than holy David, who said to one who interposed to stay him from a course he would have afterwards regretted, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy advice !”<sup>d</sup> So be it with us this day !

It is a merciful ordinance of the God of our salvation, that human need should be supplied by human beneficence ; and that those very necessities that sever the selfish and unchristian, should only bind more closely together those who “are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”<sup>e</sup> And when I lay before you the simple fact of the necessities of these schools, and look around, and see on all sides indications of power to supply them, I should feel it to be wronging your Christian benevolence to doubt whether they will be permitted to continue another day. On that point therefore I shall say little more. I will rely on a more powerful advocate within your own

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 10.

<sup>c</sup> Heb. xiii. 22.

<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. xxv. 33.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xii. 5.

bosoms, and will only further dwell on the subject, as it bears upon the text we have been considering.

If then, brethren, you are yourselves—in the sense in which we have viewed that text—“men in understanding,” if you enjoy the privileges, and taste the comforts arising from Christian instruction, you will not fail to remember that the light of Christian truth was not given to you to hide, or to keep for your own advantage alone, but to impart to others. The enlightened Christian “has no greater joy” than to extend “the knowledge of the glory of God in Jesus Christ.”<sup>f</sup> If you are “men” in sympathy and kindness, like the Apostle, if you are merciful, like his and your Blessed Master, you will, like Him, “have compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.”<sup>g</sup> Compassion is indeed the feeling with which the experienced Christian looks on youth, and especially on youthful ignorance, as he sees it “out of the way,” astray in the wilderness of life, without apprehension of the dangers that beset it. If you reside constantly in this fair neighbourhood, look around you from your homes, and I think you will be startled to remark that, where so much has been done for other and inferior cultivation,—where the field, the tree, the

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 6.

<sup>g</sup> Heb. v. 2.

flower, the plant, have received and repaid the hand of diligence and skill, many a human plant which care and culture might, under God's blessing, have reclaimed, has been permitted to grow wild. Let that higher and happier culture have your immediate care. If your duties call you to scenes where human cares and human crimes abound, and prevail beyond your control, carry with you thither the thought that there is at least one spot, where you have contributed your efforts, according to your power, to restrain and correct them. Carry with you the thought that, from that spot, prayers from childhood's lips are going up for a memorial of your Christian kindness before God: and more—that dying lips have testified with thankfulness, as I know that they have, benefits and blessings received there. You may survey with admiration the wealth and magnificence of that “crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth;”<sup>h</sup> but an hour will come when, were it all your own, you would lay it freely down, could it purchase the remembrance of your having been instrumental to the preventing one crime by the restraint of Christian principle, or the drying one tear by the power of Christian comfort.

But I hasten to conclude: would that, finally,

<sup>h</sup> Isa. xxiii. 8.

I might be enabled to apply to the present occasion other words of the same Apostle whose exhortation has now engaged our thoughts. They are these: "I bear record, that to their power, yea and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves: and this they did, not as we hoped"—but beyond our hope—"and first gave their own selves to the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 3, 5.

**SERMONS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.**

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**THE HOUSEHOLD OF CHRIST.**

**THE LEAVEN OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.**

221  
**CLERICAL DUTIES.**

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# **A SERMON**

**PREACHED IN**

**THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**IN OXFORD**

**AT THE GENERAL ORDINATION**

**HELD BY**

**THE HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND**

**RICHARD, LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD,**

**ON SUNDAY, DEC. 20, 1835,**

**BY**

**WILLIAM JACOBSON, M.A.**

**FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE, AND VICE-PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALEN HALL.**

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**PRINTED BY DESIRE OF THE BISHOP.**

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**M.DCCC.XXXVI.**



1 TIMOTHY IV. 15.

*Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them;  
that thy profiting may appear to all.*

SUCH is part of the charge given by the great apostle of the Gentiles to his own son in the faith. We can have no difficulty in determining *what* things these were to which the primitive bishop of Ephesus was thus called upon to consecrate all his energies. They may be gathered most easily from the general tenor of the whole Epistle: they are put before us in the way of summary in the 12th and 13th verses of this chapter. Timothy was to be an "example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity:" he was to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." In public and in private; in cultivating the graces of the Christian character in his heart, or exhibiting them in his daily walk and conversation; and in the instructions which he delivered, whether in the way of expounding Holy Scripture, or in practical exhortation, or in imparting that knowledge, the possession of which makes a man an intelligent and well-informed Christian; it was with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength, that he was to devote himself to the discharge of the duties of his high office. Nor was it once for all that this dedication of his entire self was to be made: lapse of time did not cancel or even weaken the obligation. Several years of his life and episcopate had passed away, and we find St. Paul, in a



second Epistle, still calling upon him to *continue* in the things which he had learned, still charging him to be “instant in season and out of season.”

If such repeated, such solemn admonitions, were thought not superfluous in the case of one so zealous, and conscientious, and devoted, can it be for a moment thought that the demand is smaller and less urgent which is made on ministers of the Gospel in a subsequent age? Can the Clergyman of the present day say that less is looked for—can he venture to think that less will be accepted at his hands?

*Lapse of time* cannot be pleaded as having brought any exemption. Shall we look to *change of circumstances*, and think that there we can find good ground for considerable abatement in the claims made upon us, that there we have conveyed to us a license for discharging our professional duties more at our own discretion? On which side has any such change been effected? Are we better qualified to be “able ministers of the New Testament” than he was who had been the chosen companion of St. Paul in his journeys and labours, who had obtained his knowledge of Christianity from apostolic lips, and formed his habits upon apostolical example? or is the field of our labour so much improved, that the same earnestness, the same incessant toil is no longer requisite? Would it not rather seem that, turn which way we will, we meet something to remind us that obligations to zealous and uninterrupted labour have *increased* upon us?

We have not the powers which the great Head of the church was pleased to grant to the first pastors of it. The limits of the field may have been enlarged, but there is not a spot within those limits which does

not claim the same patient and unwearied culture. If there were, in the first ages, "fables and endless genealogies," such as threatened to absorb the care and attention which belonged of right to higher and better things, we are not free from unedifying disputations. If in apostolic times the ignorance of those who knew not what they spake, nor whereof they affirmed, came forward in the garb and attitude of a teacher, we can be at no loss to trace in our own day the same blind, and arrogant, and mischievous presumption. Heresy, which will not yield to a first and second admonition, still rears its head, carrying, by the bold sophistry of its interpretations, or by direct denials of scriptural statements, the sentence of self-condemnation about with it. Vain talkers and deceivers, whose mouths required stopping by the strong arm of discipline, were not confined to the early Cretan church.

If the world had power to lure away Demas from the side of Paul the aged and the prisoner, its seductions are not diminished in number; they have lost none of their power to subvert us in the present day. In many respects, the attacks of the world upon the heart of the Christian are more subtle now than they were then, and therefore teem with more sure and deadly peril. And if we regard the world in its other aspect—as the field of ministerial labour—we have to view it as the New Testament teaches us to view it, "lying in wickedness," and we are forewarned that friendship with it is enmity against God. Whatever may be the differences existing between a town and country population, the lower orders are too generally sunk in ignorance, if not in vice, and the higher ranks too much

devoted to pursuits, varying indeed in kind, but all uniformly bearing the stamp of vanity upon them, when tried and tested by the word of God. To raise the one class above their low and grovelling state, to warn the other of the worthlessness of their present objects, and set before them the consequences of their continued devotedness to such pursuits—this is part of the work of the clerical office. Rich and poor, learned and unlearned, alike are in the eye of Heaven guilty. The office of the ministry is that of ambassadors of Christ, to reconcile them unto God. And in every such consideration there is enough, surely, and more than enough, to arouse us to the most diligent and active improvement of the talents committed to our care and keeping; enough to make us give ourselves wholly to the duties of our office. We must do this, as we hope ourselves to escape condemnation. But this is not all! On the due discharge of those duties the order of Providence has made the salvation of numbers to depend. It was “for lack of knowledge” that the Lord declared his people perished, when he spoke by one of the oldest of the prophets<sup>a</sup>. It was as “sheep having no shepherd” that the multitudes who thronged to hear his instructions especially moved the compassion of our Divine Redeemer in the days of his flesh<sup>b</sup>.

An appalling thought it is for all who are ministers of Christ—a thought which naturally comes with more than its ordinary force to the bosoms of those who are just entering on the ministerial office—that on *their* zeal, on *their* knowledge, on *their* diligence,

<sup>a</sup> Hosea iv. 6.

<sup>b</sup> S. Matt. ix. 36. S. Mark vi. 34.

depend the present comfort and edification, the future acceptance, the eternal happiness, of thousands ! The Son of God came down to earth, and died to save them from their iniquities, to purchase for them a better inheritance than that from which Adam by transgression fell ; and still, the indifference, the ignorance, the sloth of their spiritual guide may have the effect of leaving them in the thralldom of their sins, of shutting them out from the hope of glory here, from admission to the bliss of heaven hereafter !

Considerations such as these (and they easily admit of multiplication and enforcement in every sober and well-ordered mind) are never out of place ; they are naturally and powerfully suggested by a solemnity such as that in which we are at present engaged. But it is possible for even such considerations to receive additional weight and importance from the circumstances of the times. And if ever there was a season when they had especial claim upon our attention—if ever it has been more than usually desirable that the seriousness of an hour like the present should not terminate with the service, but should be kept alive and carried out into many a year of active and patient exertion in all its original freshness and vigour—it is so now ! Now—when we have so much reason for believing that the best security of the Established Church is henceforth to be found in the intelligent and affectionate attachment of the Laity—there is indeed even more than an ordinary call upon the Clergy for elevated piety, for unreserved devotedness to their work. If ever there was a time when, more than at any other, it might be said that the man who entered

on the work of the ministry from secular and unworthy motives was making a bad bargain for both worlds, it is the day in which we live.

When St. Paul instructed Timothy to "meditate" on the rules of duty he had given him, he used a word more pregnant with meaning than it at first sight appears. The "meditate on these things," ταῦτα μελέτα of the text, no less than the direction of the 7th verse, "Exercise thyself unto godliness," γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, carried the mind of the original readers of St. Paul at once to the gymnasium and the games, and shewed that he who proposed to reach the apostolic standard was bound to the same singleness of purpose, the same ardour, the same zeal, and the same steadiness as one who entered the lists for the prize at any of the great annual contests. The primitive bishop of Ephesus was called to exemplify a readiness to sacrifice ease and forego enjoyment, an aptitude and a firmness in the endurance of toil and hardship, of the same kind as that which was exhibited by those who strove for the corruptible crown. If during months of wearisome training and painful privation those candidates were raised above the annoyances of the passing hour by their vivid and realizing anticipations of ultimate success, so was Timothy in his day and generation—so are the ministers of Christ to the end of time, to give themselves up entirely to their great work, to make the future, the distant, the unseen, take complete possession of their minds, and exercise an absolute and engrossing command over all their energies.

"Instant" they are to be "in season, out of season." Ample are the opportunities afforded of com-

plying with both divisions of this precept! Fervour of devotion in public worship affectionate earnestness in public instruction—these are constantly to be exhibited. Explaining the nature and enforcing the obligation of the Sacraments; preparing the young for the rite of Confirmation; visitation of the sick; instruction of the ignorant; superintending the education of the children of the poor—these are a few of the duties which devolve on the Christian minister, and are always “in season.” The minister of the Church of England is wanting to himself, and to his calling, if he fail in any one of these; if he do not, over and above and apart from all such regular seasons, exert himself to turn to full account all those occasional services which are so admirably adapted to produce a lasting impression on the mind, addressing themselves as they do to all the most interesting periods of human existence, whether for joy or sorrow.

But St. Paul proceeds further: “Give thyself wholly to them;” and the service, in which we are now occupied, echoes and enforces this charge when it calls on those who are entering on the work of the ministry, “to apply all their diligence to frame and fashion their lives according to the doctrine of Christ<sup>c</sup>.”

This of course involves many a sacrifice in the way of elegant pursuits, of political occupations, and of innocent amusements. Many an indulgence in the way of social intercourse, in the gratification of taste, in the cultivation of literature and science, are lawful, and, it may be, expedient to Laymen, which

<sup>c</sup> Bishop's 6th Question to Deacons.

the Clergy, if they are minded to remain faithful to the vows which are upon them, must not allow to themselves. They have higher objects of all-engrossing interest ; objects, to the pursuit of which they have *volunteered* themselves, and which cannot be attained at a less price than the giving up all their time and talent and energy to the pursuit of them. They are to lay aside the study of the world and the flesh ; and to remember that they do not stand or fall alone ; that a failure on their part is “ as when a standardbearer fainteth,” or as when a pilot yields to fatigue and drowsiness, and leaves to sure and utter destruction a vessel crowded with those who place implicit confidence in his skill and fidelity. “ If ministers walk near the brink, many of their people will assuredly fall down the precipice<sup>d</sup>.”

The work of the ministry affords ample scope for all our industry and vigilance. It calls for all the deliberation and carefulness and system which we can give to the distribution of our time, and the arrangement of the manifold duties which are to be met by various portions of it. Theological study in its several branches ; private devotion, the very oil to the lamp ; the preparation of discourses for the pulpit ; catechizing the young ; teaching the ignorant ; reclaiming the backslider ; refuting the gainsayer ;—these are a sample of the regular and indispensable occupations of the minister who rightly appreciates his office, and is duly anxious to seize every opportunity of discharging the obligations under which he is laid. The very words of this Service bind him, as far as in him lies, “ to bring his flock into an agreement in the faith and know-

<sup>d</sup> Life of Rev. T. Scott.

ledge of God, and ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ; with all care and diligence to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word." To be indolent and indifferent, to be irregular and infrequent in prayer; to show more of the spirit of the hireling than of the faithful and good shepherd, this must unavoidably and speedily grieve the Holy Spirit, without whose cooperation and blessing we shall but labour in vain and spend our strength for nought. Without that cooperation and blessing the Clergyman may indeed do much towards promoting the civilization and heightening the comfort of those among whom he lives; he may even in some sort work a moral improvement in many of those committed to his charge—but his pastoral labours will not have their due efficacy or success in diffusing and promoting pure and undefiled religion; he will not be making those about him Christians.

The meditation which Timothy was called upon to give to his duties—the entire consecration of himself to them, which was looked for at his hands, were to be such that his profiting was to appear unto all men. To “shine as lights in the world in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” belongs to *all* believers—to Clergy and Laity alike; but there is a higher sense in which the apostles were called “the light of the world,” and in a sense as high as that should every minister of Christ feel himself bound to outshine those who are not raised above their brethren as the authorized dispensers of God's Word and Sacraments. For them it may be enough that they are conscious, gratefully and cheerfully conscious of a growth in grace, of



advancement in holiness, of increasing religious knowledge ; but his progress must be marked and evident to the world at large : for how are those who move within the sphere of his influence to go forward, if he, their model and their guide, is stationary, or so sluggish that his movements are imperceptible ? The progress of Timothy was to be apparent to all. Not striking to mere babes in Christ alone, but such as should impress and stimulate even the mature disciple—such as might excite the admiring thankfulness even of old men and fathers. And *we* are unquestionably bound to act in the spirit of the charge which was given to him. The incessant and abundant labours, the cheerful and unreserved sacrifice of self—the overflowing tenderness for the weaknesses of others which characterised his great Instructor, are left as an example which we at our humble distance are called upon to copy.

A quiet, decent discharge of clerical duty, actuated by no higher motive than the consulting present ease and comfort, the securing the esteem of the world, or the good-will of a patron, will have its reward ; but that reward will not be found in the approbation of the Chief Shepherd, in the crown which the Great Head of the Church will give at the last to those who have fought the good fight.

To think little of the duties of the ministerial office, to make them a secondary and subsidiary avocation—to be content with a low and stationary standard without progress, without improvement—this is to be false to those vows which some are this day coming forward to take upon themselves. Public indignation may not be expressed so loudly or so

generally when those vows are thus violated and forgotten, as it is in many cases of breach of trust which are merely secular and temporal. But a worldly careless Clergyman's breach of trust is in fact far greater than any of these, if we view him merely as a recognised and appointed servant of the public—appointed for the express purpose of extending the knowledge and consolations of religion, of raising the tone of morals in the neighbourhood where he is fixed. And what defaulter—however large the amount of his fraud—however aggravated its circumstances—can be for a moment thought to equal in criminality the man, who having, at his own free wish and procuring, been lawfully called and sent to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, resigns himself to indolence, or devotes his powers and his time to other objects and pursuits?

To enlarge on the importance of Clerical Duties—to insist on the obligation to perform them with all the zeal and energy which we can command—to shew that weighty as these duties are—pressing as these obligations have uniformly been—the character of the times in which we live, and the circumstances in which Providence has placed us, combine to give them something more than even their usual and intrinsic force—were an easy matter. And it would be the obvious course on ordinary occasions of this kind, where those admitted to Holy Orders are one and all actually and immediately going forth to take some position in the vineyard. But in this Diocese there is always a peculiar class of candidates, to whom it may perhaps be allowed to address a few words in conclusion of the present discourse. The

usages of this place—the nature of the institutions, with which it is the privilege of many among us to be intimately connected, ensure there being a number admitted to the ministry at every recurring ordination, who are little likely for years to come to be regularly employed in the active discharge of their professional duties.

Such persons have *snares and temptations* peculiarly their own—they have also *duties* which especially belong to them. The snares and temptations are many and great even to those who are engaged in the office of tuition. It is our happiness and our glory indeed, that the duties of that office are not confined to the mere communication of knowledge—that its due discharge involves a moral superintendence—a tenderness for the spiritual welfare of those committed to our care, which in itself partakes largely of a pastoral character. And this may, if rightly improved, go far, under the blessing of God, to preserve us amid those snares and temptations. But tempted we all of us are—those who reside without taking part in collegiate discipline and instruction more especially—to become cold and selfish, careless and secularized. The vows made at Ordination are little heeded—the solemnities of an hour like this are forgotten. The duties to which a pledge was then given, are seldom called back to the memory, save when at rare and uncertain intervals something like clerical duty within the walls of College presents itself, or an opportunity offers for assisting a brother Clergyman. The tendency of the social habits of the place, if not watched and guarded against, is too much to leave the conversation of the same general and worldly

character which prevails in ordinary company elsewhere—and there are none of those subsidiary aids for the preservation of purity and peace of mind—for the securing consistency—which a Clergyman actually on duty rarely fails to find in the very circumstances of his position. The consciousness that the eye of the public is upon him—that men little scrupulous about their own conduct are strict and keen in watching *him*—that he, in the eyes of the worldly and the careless, is the representative of Religion and the Church—will of itself go far towards making a parochial Clergyman careful, and decorous at all events, in his whole demeanour. The sufferings occasioned by sickness and bereavement—the agonies of the bed of death are to him familiar realities—and his spirit is naturally sobered by their contact. But with such matters the resident in the University has frequently no more than a theoretical acquaintance: and the consequence too often is, that he by degrees comes in some sort to forget that he is a Clergyman. His amusements, his habits, his conversation—all may be beyond reproach in themselves considered—yet there may be nothing to mark the man of God—nothing which savours of that spiritual and unworldly character which befits the minister of the Gospel, to which the Church of England pledges her Clergy. But have the vows taken and made at his Ordination been cancelled? Are his obligations, in the eye of Heaven, altered or modified by the peculiarity of his position to any thing like the extent which his carriage and conduct might seem to imply?

Let us glance for a moment at the peculiar duties of those who are likely to remain in the University

after Ordination. If there be one gem in the diadem of the Church of England which shines with a brilliancy beyond the rest, and a brilliancy peculiarly her own—that jewel is the large, and profound, and sanctified learning which has characterised her Clergy<sup>c</sup>. To whom is it more natural to look for the maintenance of the high reputation of the Anglican Church for theological lore, than to those, who, having been admitted within the ranks of her ministers, continue to enjoy the leisure and literary advantages of academical life? And if ever there should *seem* to be danger of the places occupied by the giants of other days falling into the hands of puny and degenerate successors—to what class of Clergy should we more naturally look to roll away such a reproach from our Zion? The learning called for by the exigencies of the present times may be of a kind somewhat different from that of an earlier age. There may be much that has been well done—done once and for ever.—Let us be thankful to the wise and gracious Providence which raised up such pioneer labourers in the field of Theology, who bore the burden and heat of the day as manfully and as successfully as the great Scholars who were made instrumental in promoting the revival of letters did in their department. But let us at the same time watch and pray that we may have strength equal to our day! Entering as we do into other men's labours, let us not forget that we too have a prescribed task to perform in our generation.

<sup>c</sup> Are we to consider it only an arbitrary and accidental collocation, that “aptitude in learning” stands before even “godly conversation” in the opening Charge of the Bishop to the Archdeacon in the form of Making both Priests and Deacons?

And surely in the present day we can be at no loss where to bestow our energies. Perversions of Gospel truth are as easy and as common as ever. If the voice of Inspiration, for instance, says, that "it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure"—this may be abused into representing man as a mere machine, incapable of responsibility, —or the alternative of happiness and misery to all eternity may be so used as to exalt human liberty to such a height as to render the influences of the Holy Ghost idle and unnecessary ;—and such perversions cannot be met to any purpose without well-digested and systematized knowledge of Divinity. The controversy with the Church of Rome seems to be reviving in all the magnitude and importance which tasked the energies of our forefathers. Between ourselves and those who decline to bow to a discipline which we deem Apostolic, or withhold their assent to some of our doctrines, there is many a question at issue, on which it were presumption to enter without an intimate acquaintance with ecclesiastical antiquity. The character of the age in which we live is marked by a prodigious, and perhaps an unparalleled developement of the various powers of our nature,—by extreme political activity, —by an astonishing increase of the means of gratification sensual and intellectual—by diffused information—by a keen appetite for mental excitement—by boldness and vigour of speculation. The latter attribute has been exhibited, particularly in one country, in close connexion with Theology ; and, however we may deprecate the introduction among ourselves of the same hardy and reckless and irreverent spirit, which has too often been found in company with

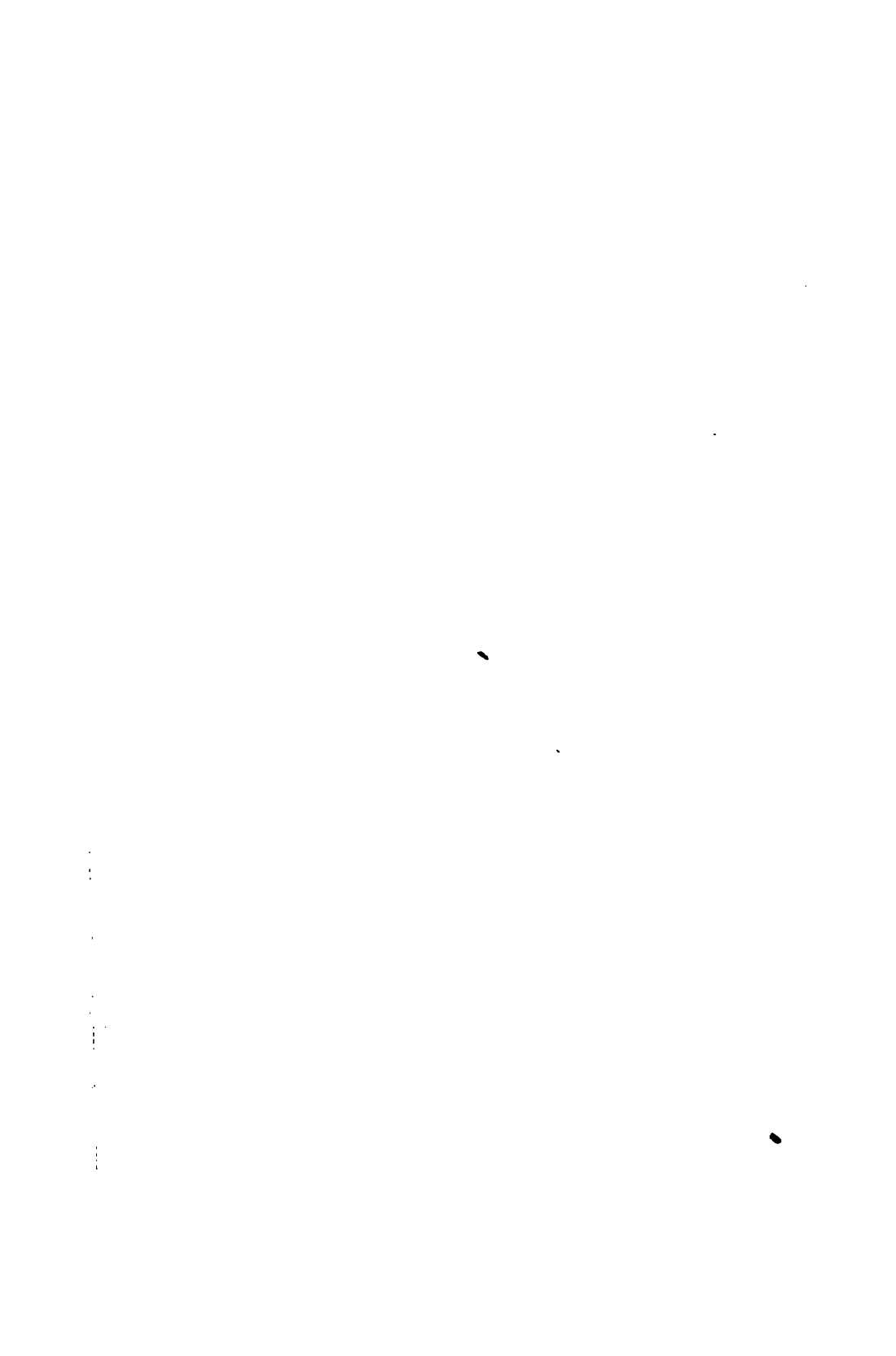
the ingenuity and research which so eminently characterise the Writers of Germany, the *results* will inevitably be imported amongst us—and to sit with folded hands, and meet the intrusion with a few sweeping and hackneyed epithets, is not the way to check the spread of the mischief.

The Clerical residents in our Universities are those to whom it more particularly belongs to take the field in controversy—to prove to the world that the Church possesses an inherent vigour amply sufficient to control for good whatever new social elements may be called into existence by the lapse of time and change of circumstances.

God in his mercy grant, that whatever may be the part respectively assigned to us, we may give ourselves wholly to our work, and that His blessing may so accompany our labours that “our profiting may appear to all.” So may the anticipations which cheered the Apostle when he had finished his course, come to be ours also. So, when the day arrives for them who sleep in the dust to awake, “some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,” may we trust to be admitted to share the happiness of those, who, having been wise in their generation, shall then “shine as the brightness of the firmament”—who, having turned many to righteousness, shall “shine as the stars for ever and ever.”







THE  
CO-OPERATION OF RELIGION AND LAW:  
AND THE  
CHRISTIAN'S USE OF THE LAW OF THE LAND:

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED

AT THE ASSIZES IN THE COUNTY OF SURREY.

---

BY WILLIAM JAMES, M.A.

VICAR OF COBHAM,  
AND FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.

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LONDON:  
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*THE CO-OPERATION OF RELIGION AND LAW:*

A

**S E R M O N,**

PREACHED BEFORE THE

RIGHT HON. LORD CHIEF JUSTICE TINDAL,

AND THE

RIGHT HON. MR. JUSTICE VAUGHAN,

AT KINGSTON-ON-THAMES,

MARCH 28, 1836.

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# SERMON I.

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## THE CO-OPERATION OF RELIGION AND LAW.

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### ROMANS xiii. 4.

*He is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

To those even, who, without any other interest in the scene, are but considerate observers of what passes before them, there is scarce any occasion more impressively solemn, than when the powers that be on earth, assume the administration of justice, and attempt, as far as is given to so feeble an instrument as man, to imitate the Supreme Almighty Ruler in the most awful of His attributes, to sit in judgment on the accused, to redress the wronged, to pass sentence on the guilty, and to avenge the cause of violated law. On an occasion, then, of such deep solemnity it has befitted us well as Christians, ay, and as reasonable beings, to present ourselves first in the house of God, and ere

such high proceedings are entered upon, to bend the knee before Him in prayer. Nothing great and arduous ought to be undertaken without preparing ourselves by prayer ; more especially then, that which affects the interests, or, it may be, the life of a fellow-citizen : we all naturally rise from prayer with our sense of duty most strong, our minds in the best frame and disposition to regard aright and according to truth, whatever moral questions may be brought before us. Such benefits, then, I would fain hope the congregation here present may have derived from the devotions in which we have been now engaged, benefits that may abide with them throughout the whole proceedings that have been thus holily ushered in ; and whatever part we severally have to bear, whatever interest to feel in those proceedings, whether any may have come as prosecutors, or as witnesses, or as jurors, or as advocates, nay, down from the very humblest of the throng, from the most unconcerned, uninterested spectator whom mere curiosity may draw to the court, up to them that fill its highest station, and have come for the exercise of the sovereign power delegated to them on this behalf, on each one of us I would fain hope He, that heareth the prayer, may shed forth each day the blessed influence of His Holy Spirit, may make all our thoughts such as may become our several stations, guiding us above all, and teaching us to feel, and to think, and to speak, and to act as in His presence.

I am aware, indeed, many of those who are to be professionally or otherwise engaged in the business of these assizes, have been unable to join our devotions here without neglecting the important interests entrusted to their care : framed as our minds are, we cannot turn in an instant from the hurry and press of business to public prayer ; public prayer demands our calmly collected thoughts, our undisturbed mind : but were this inability more general and more unquestionable than it is, it is no small advantage, if they who are not so prevented, be gathered together in the Lord's House, that by these preparatory acts of devotion we may bring our minds to a temper suitable to this solemnity, and be led to feel the sanction of religion thrown round the proceedings of our courts of law.

The Christian religion and the law of the land have at least this object in common, to maintain and uphold the happiness of men by maintaining and upholding uprightness and integrity of conduct : in promoting this common object they go hand in hand together, and mutually each support the other ; the law restraining violations of duty by its coercive power, religion persuading to the performance of it by infusing a spirit of obedience. But while we look to this their union of design, we must not lose sight of their essential difference : to contemplate their union of design, enables us to see in the civil administrator of law and justice, the minister of God ; to contemplate their essential dif-



ference of object and design, secures us against the dangerous errors that spring from a loose and careless thought of their union.

From some loose and careless imagination, that what forbids to do evil, teaches to do good, unreflecting and half-educated minds are too often led, though without, perhaps, distinctly and formally stating it to themselves, to adopt the law of the land as their rule of duty, and to think they live well enough, if there be nothing in their conduct to bring them under the fear of legal punishment.

Now human law must necessarily afford a very defective rule and measure of human duty; this is not its office: its sole end and design is to secure the order and well-being of society, to preserve the rights of men, and protect them against wrong: and therefore the only duties, which it falls within its aim and compass to prescribe, are those the violation of which would infringe the rights of others, or inflict on them some wrong; in short, it enjoins only our duties as members of society, what are due towards those around us, our *relative and social* duties. Of the duties which belong to us as individuals, the law says nothing; of private vices, *as such*, it takes no cognizance; it does not attempt to restrain them, except by example or other evil effects they become an offence against society, or are, as it is said, a *public wrongs*. There is not a more odious vice than lying: yet lying is not punishable by law, except it effects some public or social injury. Again,

drunkenness and sensual profligacy, the indulgence of the carnal lusts, these gross vices, if they are practised in private only, receive no check or even notice from the law of the land. "Let a man (I use the words of Mr. Justice Blackstone) be ever so abandoned in his principles or vicious in his practice, provided he keeps his wickedness to himself, and does not offend against the rules of public decency, he is out of the reach of human laws<sup>1</sup>."

Again, human law does not, cannot, direct us in *all* our social duties: it directs a man only in those matters, when it can punish him, if he does what it forbids, or does not what it commands: "it speaks only where it can compel<sup>2</sup>." Yet it is but a portion even of our social duties that are *compellable*. Besides to do these, then only becomes virtuous, when they are done not from compulsion, but from a willing mind; "not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake<sup>3</sup>." To avoid offence from fear of punishment only, to have no willingness for, no love of goodness, is the very definition of a bad man. Though then Christianity will give a willing mind for all these compellable duties also, many of the social duties she enjoins, seem there to begin, where those enjoined by the law end. The law commands justice and honesty, but not liberality, not gratitude, not charity. The free-will

<sup>1</sup> Blackstone's Comment. b. i. ch. i.

<sup>2</sup> Paley's Mor. Phil. b. i. ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. xiii. 5.

offerings religion prompts, are precisely those which lie beyond what a man can be compelled to perform.

From these limitations of the duties it enjoins, that they are our *relative and compellable* duties only, it follows as a necessary consequence, that human law meddles not but with *overt, open acts*; it attempts not to punish but when there is something perceptible to the sense, some outward expression by deed or by word at least of the evil that works within. The whole range then and compass of our duties, which consist in regulating the thoughts and desires and affections, these lie not within the reach of human law. It is religion that shows us the guilt of the unexpressed, but secretly cherished feelings of sin.

Then again, as to that class of our duties, which is the peculiar province of religion, (though religion indeed regards every other duty as ranging under this head,) I mean, our duties towards God, human law only interferes to prevent or to punish the more gross and outrageous violations, those most injurious to the public *as a religious body*; looking on other and less flagrant violations of what the Scripture on this head requires, as too delicate a subject for human interference; as a matter that must be left to pass between the conscience of each individual, and the Supreme to whom account must one day be given.

Human law then never was designed to be a rule

and guide for the moral conduct of men : its operations are confined to a very limited sphere of our duties : and in enforcing these, it deals out punishment to many offences *less severe* than the guilt deserves, if so by securing a *greater certainty* of that punishment being inflicted, it may be more efficacious for its great end, the prevention of crime. For instance, how baneful to society, how destructive of domestic peace, how atrocious is the sin of adultery ! It comes next after the sin of murder in the ten commandments, and was visited with equal punishment by the divine law of Moses : yet how leniently is it dealt with by our law ! I speak not as presuming to question the wisdom of the course adopted by our law on this matter, but mention the fact only to show the evil that may arise from looking to the law of the land as a sufficient rule of duty : for I would ask, could this gross crime be committed, as it sometimes is, by persons whose knowledge of their duty, whose whole education would make them shrink with horror at the thought of committing any other crime, did they not bring themselves to measure the deep guilt of adultery by these mild and lenient dealings of human law, rather than by the law of Almighty God ? Many other instances might be mentioned, in which the system of legal punishments seems to exercise a sinister influence on men's estimation of the criminality of the actions to which those punishments are awarded ; leading them to think lightly of

the guilt of such sins, as are lightly punished by the law : for instance, the disregard of truth, the lying sometimes met with in quarters, even where it amazes us ; or again, the sin of drunkenness ; or yet more especially, the unblushing prevalence of the sin of fornication. It seems the world forgets, altogether loses sight of the fact, that in these cases human law is not designed to afford any just measure of guilt ; that in these private vices, legal punishments are levelled not against the sin, but only against the harm inflicted by it on society.

On considering, then, the law of the land as acting in conjunction with religion, by upholding moral rectitude, it was necessary to guard against these erroneous impressions, by considering first their difference of object and design, and remembering ourselves of the principles on which human law bases its system of punishments, and the class of duties to which its operations are confined. And however limited may be that class and sphere of moral duties on which it is directly employed, yet certainly the law of the land is a powerful coadjutor of religion as the guardian of moral uprightness, and unites with her in promoting this sacred cause. The law, invested with the terrors of present punishment, enforces attention : “ where it speaks, it commands ; where it commands, it compels<sup>1</sup> : ” it “ bears not the sword in vain.” Rough and other-

<sup>1</sup> Paley's Mor. Phil.

wise untameable spirits, who would turn a deaf ear to the remonstrances of religion, feel there is in the law of the land an arm stronger than theirs, and are constrained to obedience. And though obedience on constraint is not virtue, is not religion, it prepares the ground, it disciplines the mind, to receive the seed that may produce it. To keep a man from doing ill, is an important step towards training him to do well. He who is accustomed to put some check on his actions, though it be but from the fear of legal punishment, is more likely to be brought to an habitual self-control, than he who allows himself to be hurried along with every flash and outbreak of his unbridled will and passions. Such a one at least acknowledges some rule of conduct; he feels some sense of duty. The violence and outrage, indeed, to which excited passion may give rise, are directly punishable by the law: and many a man, doubtless, from a wholesome fear of this punishment, has curbed his passions in, and checked himself in time, lest he should be betrayed into any such violence. In the hour of strong temptation, when from human infirmity religious principle might be giving way, a fear of the law of the land comes in aid with advantage, inclines the balanced will to the better side, and rescues the hesitating soul from the commission of sin, and from its demoralizing consequences, And thus human law, though the actions of men alone are the direct and proper field of its coercion,

obtains also an indirect influence over their thoughts and feelings.

In maintaining then the good order of society, in guarding the rights of men, in discountenancing vice, in preventing crime by the terror of punishment, civil magistrates are ministers of God, doing His work, forwarding His gracious design. St. Paul earnestly presses on our attention this their sacred character; in one short sentence twice is the title given them, the ministers of God; and it is evident, the Apostle's words more especially apply to that branch of the executive power, which is employed in the administration of justice. "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the *minister of God* to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is *the minister of God*, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil." To God alone "vengeance belongeth:" to Him who knows the inmost thoughts and desires of the heart, the most secret springs of every action, who sees each deed or design not in its true substance and nature only, but in all its circumstances, to Him, the Supreme Judge of all mankind, and to Him alone, it belongs to render to every man according to his deeds. "It is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord." But as His ministers, the civil magis-

trates sit in judgment ; and wherever guilt is ascertained and clearly proved, wherever that majesty which His word has thrown around human law, has been wronged and violated, it is their province, as ministers of God, as revengers of the wrong, “to execute wrath and punishment on him that doeth evil.”

Here then religion in her turn gives support to the law of the land, upholding the sacred character of the power by which it is administered or framed, and inculcating obedience and respect, a reverential submission “to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake ;” and over and above all this, it is religion that imparts to the law the main strength of its preventive influence as a means of deterring men from a crime. “No law” (says the philosophic historian of the Peloponnesian war, speaking of the readiness of offenders to run the risk of the severest punishments in the hope of escaping altogether with impunity,) “no law can prevent crime : for men have tried all degrees of punishment, making them continually more and more severe, if that by any means they might be less harmed by evil doers : and it is probable, that of old, milder punishments were inflicted upon the most heinous crimes ; but in process of time, men continuing to transgress, the severity of punishment was continually increased, even to the taking away of life ; yet men still transgress : either then,” adds he, “some greater terror than death must be devised, or surely here



is no efficient coercion<sup>1</sup>." And this statement of the Greek historian must hold good, wherever there is no true religion : to the unbeliever, to him who has no persuasion of a hereafter, it seems not an unreasonable calculation, to balance, as he will say, many years' enjoyment of his unrestrained will and passions against the few short hours of suffering that may close his career. That greater terror than death, which is needed to rebut this impious calculation and expose its tremendous extravagance, religion makes known : the sincere Christian, indeed, needs no other restraint than the Gospel : but even where the Gospel is but feebly, faintly received, and has no hold on the heart to overbear its evil propensities, still even there religion gives strength and force to the law of the land, and clothes its threatenings with terrors not their own. It is the dread of something after death, that makes the offender pause, and paralyses his guilty purpose ; let but the thought of this after-judgment be awakened, the very arm that is uplifted for the perpetration of some premeditated crime, shall drop nerveless down. The sentence of the Eternal against unrepentant sinners, as it flashes across the mind, must needs appal the heart of the most hardened and depraved : it comes with a *severity*, that will avenge to the full every degree and measure of guilt, and with a *certainty*, that none can hope to

<sup>1</sup> Thucyd. l. iii. c. 45.

elude : nor does it appear with a softened aspect, like some distant object indistinctly seen, as its horrors are brought near to the view of that man, whose conscience tells him, his guilty purposes, if carried out into action, will expose him to death by the laws of his country.

On the other hand, when the fear of capital punishment, and of its awful consequences, has been insufficient for the prevention of crime, there is nothing in such reflections as these, to deter men, as their duty may call, from bringing a criminal to his deserved punishment. As for the unhappy offender himself, if he be not wholly lost and already reprobate of God, the near approach of death must needs reclaim him : and if *but time be allowed* for him to repent and to seek his pardon in the true and only way, it is far better for him to undergo the extremest sentence of the law, than from some blot or flaw in the proceedings, some craftily devised plea, or some defect of evidence, to escape with impunity, and thereby be encouraged to continue his evil course, and treasure up for himself heavier wrath against the hour of retribution<sup>1</sup> : far better for him, if by the present suffering of the body, “ the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus<sup>2</sup>.”

This is, indeed, an awful subject to consider. But the consideration of it, if it be pressed home, will tend to remove that morbid reluctance, some

<sup>1</sup> Rom. ii. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. v. 5.

persons feel, to be instrumental in bringing an offender to justice ; it will give all our thoughts a right and healthful tone, and compel us to admit the paramount obligation on all occasions, come what may, fearlessly and faithfully to discharge our duty towards God, and towards our country. So with this regard, they, who may be summoned as witnesses, with plain and simple honesty shall declare of all they may know on the point brought before them, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, neither adding to it, nor diminishing from it, but speaking as men needs must, who are conscious they speak in the presence of Him, whose help even to the last great day they have invoked on their souls ; advocates will exert all their talents for justice' sake, to defeat the wiles of shuffling craftiness, and bring to light hidden guilt, and will pour forth their choicest eloquence in pleading the cause of injured innocence ; jurors will give their grave attention, their utmost diligence so to find, that their verdict may really be according to exact right and truth ; and they also, who from the seat and throne of justice preside over all, whenever their high duty may lead them, upon the verdict given, to award according to law, will pronounce the sentence in righteousness, as ministers of God : for all the proceedings of our courts of justice, all the judgments passed on earth, derive their dread solemnness, and their most impressive warning, from the remembrance they bring of the judgment to come.

*THE CHRISTIAN'S USE OF THE LAW OF THE LAND:*

A

**S E R M O N,**

PREACHED BEFORE THE

RIGHT HON. LORD ABINGER, LORD CHIEF BARON, .

AT GUILDFORD,

JULY 28, 1836.



## S E R M O N   I I.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S USE OF THE LAW OF THE LAND.

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I CORINTHIANS vi. 7.

*Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you,  
because ye go to law one with another.*

MY design, in my sermon at the Spring Assizes, was to show the support our religion and the law of our country mutually lend each other: the law, in the limited sphere of human duties to which its operations are confined, coercing the stubborn and hardened, by its threatenings preventing crime, or by its punishments so visiting the detected criminal, "that others also may fear"<sup>1</sup> to offend; religion aiding the strength of the law by adding the terrors of the Lord to those of earthly punishments, and yet more especially by her mild persuasive spirit prompting a Christian obedience to the powers that be, and upholding the civil magistrates in their sacred cha-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. v. 20.

racter, as exercising, so far as is allowed to man, the dread prerogative of the Almighty, in that it is theirs to administer justice and vengeance on the guilty, being (as St. Paul says) “ministers of God, revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil<sup>1</sup>.” But this sacred sanction being given to our courts of judicature, a danger may arise lest people should therefore suppose they may on every occasion of imagined wrong seek redress from the law of the land without any restraint at all from religion, and even gratify a natural propensity to revenge by appealing to them, who thus appear as God’s ministers, appointed in His name revengers on earth, to execute wrath on them that do evil : others, on the contrary, may be disposed to question altogether, whether there be any such harmonious interchange of support between religion and human law, and to maintain that Christianity is altogether of another spirit, and with all her heaven-born powers of patience and forbearance seeks not the aid of earthly tribunals, but rather forbids all resistance to the evil ; so that there is utterly a fault among Christians, if ever they go to law one with another.

It may, then, suit well the present solemnity, to consider this question, and search out the truth ; that if any of us may have need to appeal to the laws of our country, our conduct in such matter

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii.

may stand defended, not on the plea of established practice, but on our knowledge of a Christian's duty : for whenever any argument against a practice, however well established, may seem to be drawn from the Gospel, there is no other course for Christians than either to renounce the practice, or to refute the argument.

Now there are two places in the New Testament from which, principally, it may seem to be inferred, that a Christian is not allowed to appeal to courts of law ; that portion of St. Paul's Epistle from which my text is taken, and the precept of our Lord Himself in His sermon on the mount, " Resist not the evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also ; and if any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." This last clause, indeed, has been sometimes regarded as a specific precept, commanding us to submit to double wrong, when sued at law, rather than to seek redress by defending the suit. And when it is asserted, as if to ease the strictness of the precept, that the instances in which this repetition of a wrong is to be invited, are slight and not insupportable, the assertion seems neither satisfactory nor well warranted : it is not satisfactory to be told that a blow on one's cheek, or the loss of one's very clothes, is a slight and supportable

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 39, 40.



wrong: and looking to the general command, "Resist not the evil," I see no warrant for limiting it to wrongs slight and supportable even as these, instanced in the particular precepts, may be deemed. To turn the cheek to the smiter<sup>1</sup> was a proverbial expression, and signified, to bear with patience a personal affront. Our Lord, in the language of those countries, may be truly said to have turned his cheek to the smiter, when at the palace of Caiaphas he made his calm and dignified remonstrance against the high priest's officer who struck him with the palm of his hand, and Jesus answered, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" We have here the example of what Christ has done, to secure us against the error of a literal interpretation of what He has said: His example to affix and demonstrate the meaning of His precept. Patient forbearance, then, is enjoined by the precept, to turn the cheek to the smiter: a compliance with its letter might, perhaps, sometimes even defeat its conciliatory spirit. And if a literal interpretation here would be manifestly erroneous, shall we think we are in no danger of erring from our Lord's real meaning and purpose, if we literally adopt as a specific precept the words that immediately follow, and if any one sues us at law to take away our coat, believe it our Christian duty to give that man our cloak also?

<sup>1</sup> Lam. iii. 20; Isaiah iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> John xviii. 22, 23.

The truth is, neither of these two clauses are to be taken as specific precepts, but as parts of a general instruction and rule given by Christ to form the disposition and character of a Christian. The Jews had found the principle of retaliation continually insisted on in the criminal and civil law of Moses : except in the cases of certain crimes against religion and the Most High, certain crimes against parents and chief magistrates, whose authority is from Him, and certain crimes of gross licentiousness and impurity, all which great sins against the Lord were made punishable by death, the awards of Jewish courts of justice were always to be based on this principle ; “ life for life, wound for wound, strife for strife, eye for eye, tooth for tooth ; as a man hath done, so shall it be done to him again <sup>1</sup> :” but with a perverseness that would appear strange, were not others who call themselves Christians too often guilty of it, the Jews drew this maxim of their judicial proceedings into a rule for private conduct, and made it a sanction to each individual, as judge and avenger of his own cause, to retaliate on his neighbour whatever wrong he might have received. The vindictive spirit of this system of retaliation Christ here condemns : *resist not the evil ; withstand him not, by opposing like return ; pay not back evil for evil* : but if harm being done, the same amount of harm must needs be done

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxi. ; Levit. xxiv. ; Deut. xix.

again—if, foregoing this course of retaliation, you fear your adversary will be encouraged to repeat the evil he has brought upon you, be it so ; it is better to suffer wrong, than to do wrong : if a blow on the cheek must be followed by a blow, the loss of a coat by the loss of a cloak, it is better to bear that wrong repeated against yourself, than in a vindictive spirit to inflict it on your adversary. The turn of expression has an admirable force and propriety ; it finely contrasts the conduct enjoined with the conduct forbidden : the crooked staff must be bent in the opposite direction to make it straight. And, that no loophole may remain for the evasion of the precept, it is expressly instanced, that we may not act on this desire of retaliation even under the authorized forms of judicial proceedings, when sued at law. Looking, then, to the whole scope and bearing of the instruction here given, our Lord does not prohibit us, when wronged, from appealing to a court of justice, but only from doing so in a spirit of retaliation, and using the defensive armour of the law as a cloak for revenge.

Nor can any sound argument against the allowableness of Christians appealing to the law, be gathered from the Epistle of St. Paul, whence my text is taken. The chief matter there charged against the Corinthians is, that they had occasion to go to law at all ; this, indeed, was utterly a fault among them, a great defect in their Christian character. “ It is utterly a fault among you, that

ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren." They who as Christians ought rather to have put up with wrong, and have suffered patiently, were so far from this Christian spirit, that they showed no regard for the interests even of their fellow-Christians, but were themselves guilty of fraud and wrong against those whom, as their brethren in Christ, they were especially bound to love and in all their rights respect. But this unchristian spirit was to be checked not by the fear of an earthly, much less an heathen, tribunal, but by a higher motive and deeper thoughts. "Know ye not," proceeds the Apostle, "that the unrighteous (*i. e.* the doers of fraud and wrong) shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The other and minor charge against them is, that, occasion of complaint having arisen, they had sought redress, not through the judgment of their fellow-Christians, but through the heathen magistrates; that they went to law before the unbelievers and the unjust, and not before the saints. In the very place, then, where some would suppose Christians are forbidden to go to law, there the Apostle directs the Corinthians, whenever, unhappily, needful occasion should have arisen, to seek the arbitration and judgment, not of the heathen, but of their fellow-Christians.

In a country where "Christianity is part of the

law of the land<sup>1</sup>," to appeal to the courts of justice is to tell one's wrong<sup>2</sup> unto the Church; it is to seek the judgment of those who, in the Church of Christ amongst us, are set over these matters by the authority in all such causes supreme.

The sanction the Gospel gives to all the authorities on earth, even to heathen governments, commanding submission to *every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake*, because, though the particular form that may be adopted in different countries may depend on the will of man, that there should be some form of government is *the ordinance of God*; this sacred sanction comes with an especial force to uphold the authority of those governments which acknowledge the Christian religion, and gather rules for their proceedings from its heavenly records: but of all the acts of human governments, the chiefest sanction of religion is surely given to those which are directed to the preservation of right and the prevention of crime; those which are employed in the administration of justice; that quality, which is essential to maintain social order and peace amongst men, which stands the first of the "king-becoming graces<sup>3</sup>," nay, which is an attribute whence Christ Himself, the Just One, is named. If, indeed, Christianity had her full and perfect sway, justice were enthroned

<sup>1</sup> Blackst. Comm. b. iv. ch. iv.      <sup>2</sup> Matt. xviii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Macbeth iv. 3.—Malc.

in the heart of every individual, and there were no need of a compulsory system to secure and enforce its principles in the dealings between man and man ; but in the turbid and corrupted currents of this world's affairs, with the loose hold religion has on the minds of many even in this professedly Christian country, where the law is evidently necessary for the correction of wrongs and the punishment of crimes, it were absurd to suppose the Gospel sanctions the authority of our courts of justice, and yet at the same time prohibits an appeal to them, and so by this prohibition renders them powerless and dumb.

The law of the land, and the methods of administering it, may be regarded as a system of machinery admirably devised for the defence and security of the liberties, the property, the persons of all members of the realm : but the machine will not perform its office, unless it be set in motion ; the law will not uphold the general welfare, unless individuals, when they are wronged, bring their causes before its tribunals : it guarantees the general security by the effectiveness of its support to every aggrieved part that seeks redress.

Hence arises a ground of duty to all who live under the protection of the law, to bring before its courts those that violate its enactments and set at nought its restraints. In the case of *crimes*, those offences which, as they affect the community as well as the individual, are called *public wrongs*, this

duty is always acknowledged; in such cases the law itself often steps in between the party injured and what compassion he might feel towards the party that has injured him, takes away his liberty of choosing his course, and binds him over to prosecute the offender: and somewhat of the same ground of duty must exist in the case of *private wrongs* also, if so be that acquiescence in an injury by an individual, would endanger the interests of other members of the community, and be an encouragement to similar injuries against them. As to his own private wrong, indeed, it is entirely at a man's option to acquiesce in it, or no: the harm his acquiescence may bring on others, requires his consideration, and may make it his duty, if upon proposals of accommodation the offending party refuse to satisfy his just demands, to compel them to do so by the strong arm of the law.

Such being the nature and reason of duty which may lead a Christian to go to law, it is evident, this justifies him only when he does so as *a measure of defence*, whether for himself, or for others; as a means to obtain restitution of what he has been deprived of, or to prevent a repetition of the wrong. And as a Christian can only go to law for the purpose of defence, it never can be justifiable for him, when engaged in a suit, to throw obstructions in the way of the fair decision of the question, by overbearing his adversary with unnecessarily expensive processes, and seeking to harass and wear him

out by vexatious methods and the law's delay. And even as a measure of defence, a Christian cannot innocently appeal to the law, unless there be a sufficient cause : it ill accords with the precepts of the Gospel, to be litigious, and ready on every slight and trifling provocation to take the law of one's neighbour. Though the chief blame against the Corinthians was, that they wronged and defrauded their brethren, it was their blame also, that they would not take wrong, would not suffer themselves to be defrauded : this also was utterly a fault among them, a falling short of the perfection of the Christian character. Nay, litigiousness is wont to lead to injustice ; as seems to have been the case with these Corinthians. He that is very tenacious of his own right, and will not recede the least from his strict due, is in danger of invading the rights and cutting short the dues of others. A grasping, griping spirit often becomes an encroaching spirit. On the other hand, it has been well said, " they who scruple doing the least injury, are cautious of exacting the utmost justice<sup>1</sup>." A due regard for the welfare of others will restrain a Christian alike in the one case as in the other.

But above all must a Christian take heed, whenever he has occasion to appeal to the law, that he harbours not in his bosom any purpose of retaliating against his aggressor, any desire of requiting evil

<sup>1</sup> Spectator, No. 456.



for evil, any feeling of revenge. If St. Paul speaks of the powers on earth, the judges of the country, as revengers (rather we should say, as avengers) to execute wrath on him that doeth evil, their act in this matter is altogether ministerial; they have no private feelings in the case; the wrath they execute, is the law of the land, the public expression of that deliberate indignation against wrong and wickedness, which it is theirs to award as Ministers of Him who implanted the feeling in the heart of man for this very end, that the softer feelings of humanity might not prevent the discharge of the more stern and sacred duties of justice. And if they who appeal to our courts of judicature, bear no other feeling of indignation than this only, which the judge himself and every other uninterested honest mind must feel, here would be no violation of Christian duty: to desire the punishment of an offender for his offence's sake, is not inconsistent with Christian charity towards him; as it has been admirably observed by Bishop Butler<sup>1</sup>, a parent's punishment of his erring child is not inconsistent with parental affection. But in this instance of a parent and child the natural feelings of affection act as a counterpoise to the natural feeling of anger, that it bears not too heavily: in the case where a man smarting under the sense of suffered wrong, applies to a court of law for redress, whether as plaintiff in a

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Butler's Sermon upon Forgiveness of Injuries.

civil action, or as prosecutor in a criminal cause, it is but natural, anger will be much excited against the offender, and there is no counterpoise of a natural affection to prevent its excess. The appellant then enters on a dangerous path, a path so dangerous, that Bishop Taylor<sup>1</sup> said, a man need be an angel to manage a suit innocently : he requires all the benign influences of the Gospel to inspire him with a Christian forgiveness of injuries, and keep him amidst all the provocations that may arise in the conduct of his cause, clear from the taint of a vindictive purpose : otherwise he may find (to borrow the energetic language of Dr. South) “ when the suit is ended here below, there is an action of revenge brought against him in the court above <sup>2</sup>. ”

The thought of that Court above, which so naturally rises on the mind, whenever we enter the courts of human judicature, whether drawn thither by public duty or by private interest, or merely as unconcerned spectators, is of admirable efficacy not only to preserve in us a right temper, disposition, and conduct during the solemn proceedings, but also to draw from them an useful lesson for our general improvement. In the judicial exercise of the sovereign authority we see the collective power of the whole nation assuming the awful office of

<sup>1</sup> Life of Christ, part ii. ad. sect. xii disc. xi.

<sup>2</sup> South's Sermons, vol. vii. p. 96. Oxford. 1823.

punishing the guilty, even to the taking away of life, if this be necessary to maintain the general good order and safety of the community at large ; and when this dread power is put forth for the common good, to guard us against such offences as may harm our welfare here below, does it not stand upon us, as members of the community, to turn our thoughts home and consider each, how our own account may appear in the great Court above ? Many careless persons may think, perhaps, they sufficiently do this, when as they hear sentence passed on some convicted felon, they indulge a self-satisfaction that their own conduct has not brought them under the sharp edge of the law, and feel disposed to thank God, that they are not, as that unhappy criminal. And, if human law were a true and correct measure of human duty, perhaps this might be well : but when we think, how limited a portion of man's duty falls within the cognizance of the law of the land, how wide a field of sinfulness opens on our view, not only in neglected opportunities of good and omitted charities, but of positive sinfulness, and this not only in the soul-corrupting indulgence of evil thoughts and desires within, but even in their outward expression by word or by deed, as lying, drunkenness, fornication, and the whole range of private vices, to punish which *as such* is not the province of human law ; with this appalling catalogue of fearfully prevalent, but not indictable, sins before our view, we must

needs acknowledge, that even the convicted felon may sometimes be less guilty in the sight of the Omniscient, than many whose course of life yet exposes them not to the sentence of any earthly tribunal. In general, indeed, it is not to be supposed that he, whom neither the fear of God, nor even of the present chastisements of human justice, have restrained from crime, can have had any true sense of religion in his heart ; the crime for which he justly suffers, is generally found to be but the outbreak of an habitual immorality and irreligion : still this may have been otherwise, and yet public judgment must go forth against the offender for the public good : surely then on these solemn occasions of our assizes, it especially becomes every individual of the community to search out and try our ways and judge ourselves, that so we may not be condemned of the Lord.

The only court on earth, whose jurisdiction is co-extensive with the whole sphere and compass of human duty, is the court of conscience : in the breast of each of us is seated the image of God, as a judge deputed by Him ; but that image is much tarnished and marred, has lost its original brightness, and ill performs its judicial office : the memory often fails to bear witness of past guilt ; the judgment is often warped by partiality towards the culprit : and we may not safely rely that the acquittal of conscience will be confirmed by the Court above. The enlightened mind. of St.

Paul knew the blindness and weakness of human nature too well, to think it enough that his conscience acquitted him of wrong: "I am not conscious of any thing against myself," says he, "yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord<sup>1</sup>." There is the Supreme Court, from whose judgments is no appeal; there the action lies in its true nature, and cannot be defeated by a subtle plea or want of evidence; we every one of us, as witnesses against ourselves, must appear before that judgment-seat to give account of ourselves, while the whole course of our life shall be examined with so searching a scrutiny, as to sound all the depths and secrets of our hearts; and if, the examination closed, strict justice should follow, no man could be able to stand that trial: but it is our comfort and our blessing to know, that if we constantly endeavour by God's help to walk in His ways, and do our duty in our several stations, trusting not in our own supposed righteousness, but in His mercy through Christ, we may look forward to the great day of universal judgment, not with desponding fear, but with the full assurance of hope; the countless transgressions into which, through blindness or weakness we may have fallen, will not be imputed against us to our condemnation; in our Judge we shall behold our Saviour, Him that will come both

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 4.

Son of Man and Son of God ; as Man, touched with a compassionate feeling for our infirmities ; as God, Almighty to pronounce our pardon.

To Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, in unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, three Persons and one God, be paid all thanksgiving and praise, and worship, and glory in all Churches for ever.  
*Amen.*

THE END.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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**PRIMITIVE TRADITION RECOGNISED IN HOLY  
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A

**S E R M O N,**

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER,

AT THE VISITATION

OF THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND

**WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.**

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE,

SEPTEMBER 27, 1836.

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BY THE

**REV. JOHN KEBLE, M.A.**

VICAR OF HURSLEY,

AND PROFESSOR OF POETRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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1836.



LONDON:  
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,  
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

TO THE WORSHIPFUL AND REVEREND  
**WILLIAM DEALTRY, D.D.**

CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE OF WINTON ;  
AND TO THE REVEREND THE CLERGY OF THE DEANERIES MEETING  
AT WINCHESTER ;

**THIS SERMON**

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED :

HAVING BEEN PREACHED BEFORE THEM,  
AND BEING NOW PUBLISHED IN DEFERENCE TO THEIR EXPRESSED  
WISH  
OF EXAMINING AT THEIR LEISURE THE STATEMENTS  
THEREIN CONTAINED.



A

## S E R M O N,

&c.

---

2 TIM. i. 14.

THAT GOOD THING WHICH WAS COMMITTED UNTO THEE KEEP BY THE  
HOLY GHOST WHICH DWELLETH IN US.

ΤΗΝ ΚΑΛΗΝ ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗΝ ΦΥΛΑΣΣΟΝ, ΔΙΑ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΣ  
'ΑΓΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΝΟΙΚΟΥΝΤΟΣ 'ΕΝ 'ΗΜΙΝ.

WHATEVER men may severally anticipate concerning the final issue of the many anxious discussions which at present occupy the Catholic Church in England, all, I suppose, must feel that for the time they occasion a great perplexity and doubtfulness of mind. We are beset on every side (the clergy more especially) with conflicting difficulties, and temptations to unworthy compromise. That man must be either very confident in the accuracy of his own views, or very highly favoured in respect of clearness of judgment, or very successful in keeping himself out of the way of all controversy, who has not repeatedly found himself at a loss, within the last seven years, on such points as the following :—What are the limits of the civil power in ecclesiastical matters, and how far we may venture in the way of submission without

sacrifice of church principle : how the freedom of the Anglican church may be vindicated against the exorbitant claims of Rome, and yet no disparagement ensue of the authority inherent in the Catholic Apostolical Church : again, how the method of voluntary combination, so generally resorted to in our days for important ecclesiastical objects, may be reconciled with entire deference to episcopal prerogative ; how CHRIST's ministers may " study to be quiet," and yet do their duty as watchmen, and not let their people slumber in the midst of danger ; and how they may best unite unwearied meekness in judging, and active Christian love, with strict reserve and timely censure towards every one that walketh disorderly. The time was, not long since, when many of these points appeared to most of us as mere historical curiosities. We felt, perhaps, that they were, abstractedly, of grave importance, but we thanked God that our lot was cast in times which required not of us, as pastors and stewards in CHRIST's service, any distinct consideration and settled views concerning them. Now things are different : the course of God's providence has permitted the enemies or prompted the defenders of the Church to lay bare her very foundations ; and it has become imperative on us all, in discharge of our ordination vows, to make up our minds as well as we can, and endeavour to see our own way, on

points which we should gladly, if we might, have taken on trust.

It cannot be safe to shrink from this duty, and say, as many seem inclined to do, that we could bear persecution itself better than the perplexity of considering such things, or the responsibility of deciding for ourselves, and agitating others, concerning them. We have put our hand to the plough, and we must not—we dare not—look back. It is too late for sworn and ordained priests and ministers in the Church of God to dream of drawing back from responsibility. The nature of the case contradicts the very thought. For what responsibility can be more fearful than *his*, who indolently and unthinkingly gives his assent to changes, which, for aught he knows, may prove not only ruinous in the event, but in theory and principle also opposed to the truths and ordinances wherewith CHRIST has put him in trust? Dismissing, therefore, as a snare of our great enemy, the false comfort which many of us, perhaps, are too much inclined to take to ourselves, from a notion that by not interfering we keep ourselves irresponsible, let us see whether the unprejudiced study of those parts of Scripture, which are obviously best suited to our case, may not supply us with a better and more genuine comfort, by furnishing some one clear and unquestionable rule, which may go a good way in guiding us rightly,



independent of all results : showing us where our chief responsibility lies, and to which, among interests and duties apparently conflicting, we are bound always to give the preference.

It is natural, in such an inquiry, to turn immediately to the two Epistles to Timothy, especially the last. For, undoubtedly, it must have been to that holy Bishop a time of very great perplexity, when his Guide and Father in the faith was on the eve of departing from him : the heretics also, as appears from many passages, already beginning to infest the Asiatic churches, according to St. Paul's own prophecy. It appears from the opening of the second Epistle, that when all doubt was taken away as to St. Paul's approaching martyrdom, his affectionate disciple was in danger of being overwhelmed by his sorrow for so great a loss, joined to his sense of the heavy burden which would be laid on himself, now left comparatively alone. To these two feelings in the breast of Timothy the Apostle in his farewell letter addresses himself : remembering, as he says<sup>1</sup>, the tears which Timothy had shed, perhaps when they had last parted from each other, and longing the more for the satisfaction of seeing him again. In the mean time, there are two words, which he seems studiously to repeat again and again, that he may leave them

<sup>1</sup> Ch. ii. 4.

sounding, as it were, in his disciple's ears, for remembrancers of the two duties most pressing at the moment: ΚΑΚΟΠΑΘΗΣΩΝ, and ΠΑΡΑΚΑΤΑΘΗΚΗ: "endure hardness," and "keep that committed to thy charge."

First, with reference to the dejection of mind, by which Timothy was then suffering, "endure hardness," says the Apostle<sup>1</sup>, "as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST:" "Endure<sup>2</sup> affliction, make full proof of thy ministry;" "be thou<sup>3</sup> partaker of the affliction of the Gospel according to the power of God." The drift of all which warnings is the same as where he reminds the Thessalonians<sup>4</sup>, "When we were "with you, we told you that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." Affliction, hardness, trial, tribulation, is the very atmosphere of the gospel ministry; we never had cause to expect any thing else. "Do not, therefore," (so the Apostle implies,) "do not shrink thus over- "tenderly from the thought of losing me, which, "you now see, comes into your ordained portion of "trouble." "Be not ashamed of the testimony of our LORD, nor of me his prisoner;" do not carry your affectionate regret so far as almost to cause an appearance of defective faith. Do not take it to heart so very bitterly, as if you in some sort regretted your Christian engagement, finding so much to be

<sup>1</sup> Ch. ii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ch. iv. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ch. i. 8.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Thess. iii. 4.

borne beyond your expectation ; as if you were sorry that you had put so much confidence in me. But, instead of vain regret, take comfort in doing your duty ; resort to that fountain of supernatural grace, which was opened for you when you were consecrated to be an Apostle. “ Remember that “ thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by “ the imposition of my hands. For the SPIRIT “ which we both of us then received was not a “ spirit of fear,” of unworthy sadness and cowardice ; excessive, unreasonable dejection can be no fruit of it. Such were the tender expostulations and chidings of St. Paul, well beseeming the kindest and most thoughtful of parents recalling his own son in the faith to a manly firmness. Then, in the temper of a noble and true soldier, he propounds his own example, teaches his younger comrade the way of consolation, which he found most effectual for himself. “ Because I am ordained a herald and “ apostle and teacher, I suffer these things : but I “ am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have “ believed, and am persuaded that he is able to “ keep that which I have committed unto him “ against that day.” And elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, “ I suffer evil, “ as a malefactor, even unto bonds, but the word of “ God is not bound.” What can be more animating, what more affecting, than to witness a person like

<sup>1</sup> Ch. ii. 9.

St. Paul, full of conscious energy, power, and usefulness, thus devoutly reconciling himself to that which, humanly speaking, would have seemed the most untimely interruption of his labours? It is clear, I think, that even St. Paul found this a severe struggle; but he cheers himself, as in his former imprisonment; when he wrote to the Philippians, that the taunts of his enemies on his confinement had turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel, causing his bonds in CHRIST to be spoken of in the palace of the Cæsars, and in all places: so that even those who in speaking of his sufferings meant nothing but envy and strife, did in a manner preach CHRIST, *i. e.* make His Gospel known, and draw popular attention to His Name<sup>1</sup>. Such I take to be the true meaning of that often alleged text; far from conveying the encouragement, which some think they find in it, to irregular and schismatical efforts, but fraught with abundant consolation for those, who being anxious for the Church in evil times, feel themselves precluded from active exertions on her behalf. They can always say to themselves, "The Word of God is not bound: He can make even envy and strife involuntary heralds of His cause." Their fidelity in acting while they could is rewarded with the assurance of a strong faith, that when *their* work is over, God's eternal and

glorious work is still in progress, although they cannot see how.

But we dare not take this comfort to ourselves,—we dare not, in those instances where we find the Church bound and fettered, mitigate our regret by exulting remembrance of the expansive inherent force of divine truth,—except we be really, in some tolerable measure, doing our best for her, so far as we are at liberty. The sense of our own responsibility, and of our faithfulness to it, must lie at the root of all true and solid consolation. To this, therefore, as the one thing needful, both for the cause and for himself, the Apostle most emphatically bespeaks his disciple's attention. He loses no opportunity of reminding him of the *παρακαταθήκη*, the charge, trust, deposit, which had been left jointly in both their hands, and in the hands of all commissioned as they were. Observe how naturally, with what dexterity of affection, he passes from the mention of his own trust to that of the same trust as committed to Timothy. “I am not ashamed, for I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit, *τὴν παρακαταθήκην μου*, against that day. Hold fast the form,” or “abide by the pattern or standard, of wholesome words which thou hast heard from me, by faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS. That good thing committed unto thee” (literally, the good and noble deposit) “keep, by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth

“in us.” Surely these are words in which we ourselves are concerned, as deeply as he was, to whom they were first written. We are so far in Timothy’s case, that we are full of sorrow and perplexity at the condition in which we find the Church and Body of CHRIST JESUS: we would fain lay hold of Timothy’s and St. Paul’s consolation: let us first see to it, that we neglect not the warning given. To the companion of Apostles that warning was plain and simple. The duty imposed on him, paramount to all others, was simply to keep safe and entire a certain trust committed to his charge; to that one vital object all considerations of present expediency, temporal comfort, visible, apparent edification, were to give way. What that treasure was, Timothy could not be ignorant; nor yet could he be doubtful as to the celestial aid, by which, if not wanting to himself, he would surely be enabled to preserve it. But in both respects some consideration is requisite, before we of this day can fully apply the case to ourselves. It is not obvious at first sight, what this trust or treasure was: nor (of course) whether we are partakers of it: and even supposing those points settled, there might still remain a doubt, whether we have the same help for the faithful discharge of our trust, the HOLY GHOST dwelling in us. The consideration of these points in their order may not unfitly employ us on the present occasion.

1. And, first, as to the exact notion which we are to attach to the word *παρακαταθήκη*, “trust or deposit,” in this place: I observe that the very use of so general a word with the article implies that it had been by that time received among Christians as a term (if one may so speak) of their own, a part of the vocabulary of the holy Catholic Church. A diligent eye may detect, in St. Paul’s Epistles, many traces of the like use of language: current sayings, or senses of words, or formulæ, which the Apostle only just alludes to, as well known to all his readers. For instance, the expression, “This is a faithful saying,” which occurs repeatedly in these later Epistles, indicates, in all probability, so many Christian proverbs, familiar in the mouths of that generation of believers. Thus, in the first Epistle to Timothy, we have, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that ‘CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners’<sup>1</sup>:” This is a faithful saying, ‘If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work’<sup>2</sup>:’ This is a faithful saying, ‘That therefore we both labour and suffer reproof, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe’<sup>3</sup>.” In the second Epistle<sup>4</sup>, “It is a faithful saying, ‘If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer,

<sup>1</sup> Ch. i. 15.<sup>2</sup> Ch. iii. 1.<sup>3</sup> Ch. iv. 10.<sup>4</sup> Ch. ii. 11.

“ we shall also reign with Him ; if we deny Him, “ He also will deny us.’ ” And to Titus, after a brief summary of the gospel way of salvation, which by the exact rhythm and order of its members might almost appear to be part of a primitive hymn<sup>1</sup>, St. Paul adds the same clause, “ Faithful is the saying.” From all which I argue, that there was a certain set of “ sayings ” current among the Christians of that time, to which any allusion or appeal, however brief, would be presently understood. Nor will it be hard to find examples of single words, which had evidently acquired by that time a Christian sense ; so that, even when used absolutely, they could only be taken by Christians in a particular relation : such words, I mean, as τὸ μυστήριον, for “ the scheme of “ supernatural truth revealed in the Gospel, and “ more especially in the doctrine of our LORD’s incarnation ;” ὁ ἐχθρὸς, for “ the evil spirit ;” ἡ ὁδὸς, for “ the profession of Christianity.” These, and other examples which might be mentioned, make it surely not incredible, that ἡ παρακαταθήκη, “ the deposit, trust, or charge,” conveyed to Christian ears in those days a peculiar and definite, I had almost said a technical, meaning.

Now both this word and its kindred term, ἡ ἐντολὴ, “ the commandment,” are mentioned in connection with errors to be avoided in *doctrine*.

<sup>1</sup> See Note (B) in the Appendix.



Thus, Timothy is warned<sup>1</sup> to “keep the deposit, “avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.” Again, on mention made of the good confession, made by the same Timothy before many witnesses, at the time of his first calling to eternal life,—which “good confession” can only mean the Apostles’ Creed, or some corresponding formula, recited at baptism,—St. Paul proceeds thus: “I exhort thee “before God and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, “that thou keep *the commandment* without spot, “unrebukable, until the appearing of our LORD “JESUS CHRIST.” Does not this appear as if “the confession” in the former verse had suggested the caution about “the commandment” or “commission” in the latter? and if so, what more probable than that “the commission” means the same treasure of doctrine which we know to have been embodied in the Confession or Creed?

This interpretation of the noun *παρακαθήκη*, “deposit,” is confirmed by the repeated use of the kindred verb, *παρτίθεσθαι*, “to entrust, or commit,” in reference to Christian doctrine. For example, “This *commandment* I *commit* unto thee, son Timothy, that thou mightest charge some that they “*preach no other doctrine*”<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere (a passage which seems to me sufficient alone to warrant the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. i. 18. 3.

proposed interpretation) Timothy is instructed concerning the things which he had heard from St. Paul "before many witnesses," *i. e.* as it should seem, at a kind of public charge at his ordination :—these he is directed to commit or entrust "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also<sup>1</sup>." Ability to *teach* is the thing required : it is plain, therefore, that the trust related principally to *doctrine*<sup>2</sup>.

Further, it will be observed that the phrase of the Apostle is absolute : *the* trust, not *your* trust ; the great trust of all, in which whosoever participates has reason to consider himself especially responsible to the great Judge of heaven and earth. And it is implied that the charge of St. Paul and that of Timothy were one and the same. "Keep the good deposit," says the Apostle, "by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us." Now, what St. Paul's trust was, the trust uppermost in his heart, he himself teaches, exclaiming, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, *I have kept the faith*<sup>3</sup>." He does not say, "I have kept the flock, I have kept those left in my charge;" but, "I have kept the *faith*, the *truth* of CHRIST, the *doctrine* of the Gospel. I have watched it, and preserved it entire." Great as

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Note (C) in the Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 7.

was the holy Apostle's anxiety for the souls which God had put under his care, his anxiety for the system of CHRIST, the kingdom of heaven, did at that moment apparently engross him more entirely. And it is clearly probable, that what he felt himself to be the main care, the chief trust of all, that he would recommend to his disciple in such words as those of the text, "That good thing which is committed unto thee, keep;" especially considering that those words immediately follow a caution which can only relate to doctrinal formulæ: "Hold fast," as a model for thyself, "the form of sound words," the course of healthful, orthodox interpretations and doctrines, "which thou hast heard of me." That form of sound words, is it not obviously the same with the good deposit in the next verse?

Thus the context leads to the same exposition which, as we have seen, the parallel passages suggest—an exposition ratified also by the general consent of Christian antiquity. The good deposit is commonly understood by the Fathers to mean the *truths* committed by St. Paul to Timothy. Thus, in the paraphrase ascribed to St. Jerome<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> "Commendatum a nobis servandum tibi fidei depositum custodi. Quod a me non audisti, nec ab angelo si dicatur, libenter admittas." T. ix. 388. ed. Froben. Basil.

“ Watch over the deposit of the faith, entrusted to thy keeping by us. What thou hast not heard of me, though it were spoken by an angel, receive it not willingly.” And a venerable father of the third century, Hippolytus, having quoted the expressions, “ O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy charge,” and, “ The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men,” remarks<sup>1</sup> that “ The blessed Apostle used religious “ care in delivering these truths, which were “ easily accessible to all.” And Vincent of Lerins<sup>2</sup>: “ Keep,” says the Apostle, “ that which is committed to thy charge: *the Catholic faith,*

<sup>1</sup> “Ορα δὲ μὴ εἰς ἀπίστους καὶ βλασφήμους γλώσσας ἐγκαταθῇ ταῦτα· κίνδυνος γὰρ οὐχ ὁ τυχῶν· μετάδος δὲ εὐλαβίᾳ καὶ πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, τοῖς ἐθέλουσιν ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως μετὰ φόβου ζῆν· οὐ γὰρ μάτην ὁ μακάριος Ἀπόστολος παραινῶν Τιμοθέῳ λέγει· ὦ Τιμόθεε, τὴν παρακαταθήκην φύλαξον ἐκτρεπόμενος, κ. τ. λ. Καὶ πάλιν . . . Ἄ ἤκουσας παρ’ ἐμοῦ εἰς πολλῶν παρακλησέων, ταῦτα παράθου πιστοῖς ἀνθρώποις, κ. τ. λ. Εἰ οὖν ὁ μακάριος μετ’ εὐλαβείας παρεδίδου ταῦτα, ἅπερ ἔπασιν εὐγνωστα ἦν, βλέπων τῷ Πνεύματι, ὅτι οὐ πάντων ἦν ἡ πίστις· πόσῃ μᾶλλον ἡμεῖς κινδυνεύσομεν, εἰ ἀπλῶς καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγια μεταδώσομεν βεβήλοις καὶ ἀναξίοις ἀνδράσιν; Dem. de Christo et Antichristo, ap. Biblioth. Patrum, Gallandi, t. ii. p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> Commonit. c. xxii. “ Quid est *depositum*? id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inventum; quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti; rem non ingenii, sed doctrinæ; non usurpationis privatæ, sed publicæ traditionis; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolata; in qua non auctor debes esse, sed custos; non institutor, sed sectator; non ducens, sed sequens. ‘*Depositum*,’ inquit, ‘*custodi*.’ *catholicæ fidei talentum* inviolatum illibatumque conserva.”

as a talent, preserve thou inviolate and unalloyed."

Upon the whole, we may assume with some confidence that the good thing left in Timothy's charge, thus absolutely to be kept at all events, was the treasure of apostolical doctrines and church rules : the rules and doctrines which made up the charter of CHRIST's kingdom.

2. The next question to be settled is, whether the precept in the text apply literally to us : *i. e.* in other words, whether we have yet in our possession the identical deposit which St. Paul left with Timothy. For, *if* we have, mere natural piety would teach us to reverence and guard it as he was required to do.

Some will reply to this question at once, We have the Holy Scriptures, and we know for certain that they contain all that is important in Timothy's trust. These would resolve the custody of the good deposit into the simple duty of preserving the Scriptures incorrupt, and maintaining them in their due estimation among Christians. Undoubtedly this would be in some respects the least troublesome, if it could be proved the most correct and dutiful way. But can it be so proved ?

We are naturally, if not reasonably, jealous of the word Tradition, associated as it is in our minds with the undue claims and pernicious errors of

Rome. Yet must it not be owned, on fair consideration, that Timothy's deposit did comprise matter, independent of, and distinct from, the truths which are directly Scriptural? that it contained, besides the substance of Christian doctrine, a certain form, arrangement, selection, methodizing the whole, and distinguishing fundamentals; and also a certain system of church practice, both in government, discipline, and worship; of which, whatever portion we can prove to be still remaining, ought to be religiously guarded by us, even for the same reason that we reverence and retain that which is more properly scriptural, both being portions of the same divine treasure.

To these conclusions we are led by the consideration, first, that the truths and rules committed to Timothy's charge were at the time almost or wholly unwritten. This is clear from the very date of the Epistles which mention that charge: the latest of which must have been composed many years before St. John's gospel, and in the first of them the deposit in question is spoken of, not as an incomplete thing on its progress towards perfection, but as something so wholly sufficient, so unexceptionably accurate, as to require nothing but fidelity in its transmitters<sup>1</sup>. The holy writings themselves intimate, that the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. i. 3; vi. 14, 20.

persons to whom they were addressed were in possession of a body of truth and duty, totally distinct from themselves and independent of them. Timothy, for instance, a few verses after the text, is enjoined to take measures for the transmission, not of holy Scripture, but of the things which he had heard of St. Paul among many witnesses<sup>1</sup>. The Thessalonians had been exhorted to hold the traditions which they had received, whether by word or apostolical letter<sup>2</sup>. They could not be exhorted to hold the Christian Scriptures, since at that time in all probability no Christian Scriptures yet existed, except perhaps St. Matthew's gospel. Much later we find St. Peter declaring to the whole body of Oriental Christians, that in neither of his Epistles did he profess to reveal to them any new truth or duty, but to stir up their minds by way of remembrance of the commandment of the Apostles of the LORD and SAVIOUR<sup>3</sup>. St. John refers believers, for a standard of doctrine, to the word which they had heard from the beginning<sup>4</sup>, and intimates that it was sufficient for their Christian communion if that word abode in them. If the Word, the Commandment, the Tradition, which the latest of these holy writers severally commend in these and similar passages, meant only or chiefly the Scriptures before written, would

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Thess. ii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> 2 S. Pet. iii. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 S. John ii. 24.

there not appear a more significant mention of those Scriptures ; something nearer the tone of our own divines, when they are delivering precepts on the Rule of Faith ? As it is, the phraseology of the Epistles exactly concurs with what we should be led to expect : that the Church would be already in possession of the substance of saving Truth, in a sufficiently systematic form, by the sole teaching of the Apostles. As long as that teaching itself, or the accurate recollection of it, remained in the world, it must have constituted a standard or measure of Christian knowledge, though it had never seemed good to the Almighty to confer on us the additional boon of the books of the New Testament.

It can hardly be necessary to remind this audience, that these scattered notices are abundantly confirmed by the direct and formal testimony of the ecclesiastical writers of the age immediately following the Apostles. As often as Tertullian and Irenæus have false teachers to reprove, or unevangelical corruptions to expose, do they not refer to the tradition of the whole Church, as to something independent of the written word, and sufficient at that time to refute heresy, even alone ? Do they not employ Church tradition as parallel to Scripture, not as derived from it ? and consequently as fixing the interpretation of disputed texts, not simply by the judgment of the Church,



but by authority of that HOLY SPIRIT which inspired the oral teaching itself, of which such tradition is the record. Their practice is throughout in accordance with the following sentence of Irenæus<sup>1</sup>:—"We ought not to be still seeking among others for the truth, which it is easy to receive from the Church; since therein, as in a rich depository, the Apostles did most abundantly lodge all things appertaining to the truth: so that whoever will, may receive from her the waters of life. For the Church is the entrance to life: all the rest are but thieves and robbers. . . . And what if the Apostles themselves had left us no Scriptures? Ought we not to follow the course of tradition, such as they delivered it to those whom they entrusted with the Churches? Which rule is followed by many nations of the barbarians, those I mean who believe in Christ, without paper or ink, having salvation written in their hearts by the SPIRIT, and diligently keeping the old tradition." Then having recited the substance of the Apostles' Creed as a specimen of that tradition, he adds, "This faith those who without letters have believed, in respect of our language are indeed barbarians, but in respect of their views, habits, and conversation, have attained by faith a very high measure of illumination, and please God,

<sup>1</sup> See Note (D) in Appendix.

walking in all justice, chastity, and wisdom. And if any one should relate to them in their own languages the new inventions of the heretics, they would presently shut their ears and escape as far as possible, not enduring so much as to hear the profane discourse." This noble passage I the rather quote, because it shews that the case which was just now put, of persons left without the Scriptures to depend on tradition alone, is not a mere dream of imagination, but at that time actually existed in some parts of the Christian world. There were instances, it seems, known to Irenæus, of true believers who did not as yet know any thing of the New Testament, yet were able to stop the mouths of heretics by merely avouching the ancient apostolical tradition. As was the condition, duty, and privileges, of those faithful and simple men, such would have been those of the whole Christian world, had the inspired Scriptures either remained unwritten, or perished with so many other monuments of antiquity. Faith in those divine truths with which the Church was originally entrusted would still have been required at the hands of Christian men ; but the task of ascertaining those truths would have been far harder and more delicate. Now that it has pleased our gracious God to bestow on us, over and above, the use of His written word, can we be justified in slighting the original gift, on pretence

of being able to do without it? Surely, in whatever respect any tradition is really apostolical, to think lightly of it must be the same *kind* of sin, as if those unlearned and remote Christians, of whom Irenæus speaks, had thought lightly of the New Testament when it came to be propounded to them. We see at once in what manner sincere reverence for God's truth would lead them to treat the portions of His *written* word, as they were brought successively under their notice. If we will be impartial, we cannot hide it from ourselves that His *unwritten* word, if it can be any how authenticated, must necessarily demand the same reverence from us; and for exactly the same reason: *because it is His word.*

But, further: the fact is clearly demonstrable from Scripture, that as long as the canon of the New Testament was incomplete, the unwritten system served as a test even for the Apostles' own writings. Nothing was to be read, as canonical, except it agreed with the faith delivered once for all to the first generation of the saints. The directions of St. Paul on this subject are perfectly clear, and without reserve. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." And St. John, in his Epistles, strikes continually on the same chord. Mark his anxiety to justify his own teaching from any sus-

picion of novelty or originality : “ Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but the old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning.” He writes to them as to persons knowing the truth ; knowing all things ; not needing that any man teach them. He forbids their acquiescing without trial in any pretensions to spiritual gifts : he would have the spirits tried, whether they be of God, whatever their claim to be confirmed even by miracle ; and the test or touchstone which he recommends is, agreement with the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation. “ Every spirit that confesseth that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is of God ; and every spirit that confesseth not that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, is not of God <sup>1</sup>.” And his second Epistle speaks just the same language : “ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of CHRIST, hath not God ; he that abideth in the doctrine of CHRIST, he hath both the FATHER and the SON <sup>2</sup>.”

I do not see how we can be wrong in inferring, from these and similar passages, that the faith once for all delivered to the saints, in other words, Apostolical Tradition, was divinely appointed in the Church as the touchstone of canonical Scrip-

<sup>1</sup> S. John ii. 7, 20, 21, 27 ; iv. 1, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 2 S. John 9.

ture itself. No writing, however plausible the appearance of its having come from the Apostles, was to be accepted as theirs, if it taught any other doctrine than what they at first delivered : rather both it and its writers were to be anathema.

This use of Apostolical Tradition may well correct the presumptuous irreverence of disparaging the Fathers under plea of magnifying Scripture. Here is a tradition so highly honoured by the Almighty Founder and Guide of the Church, as to be made the standard and rule of His own divine Scriptures. The very writings of the Apostles were to be first tried by it, before they could be incorporated into the canon. Thus the Scriptures themselves, as it were, do homage to the tradition of the Apostles ; the despisers, therefore, of that tradition take part, inadvertently or profanely, with the despisers of the Scripture itself.

On the other hand, it is no less evident that Scripture, being once ascertained, became in its turn a test for every thing claiming to be of Apostolical Tradition. But on this part of the subject there is the less occasion to dwell, it being, I suppose, allowed on all hands. Only it may be well to notice a distinction not always sufficiently kept in view by modern writers on the rule of faith ; viz. that whereas Scripture was from the beginning appealed to, of course, as a test of *positive* truth, it could only then be appealed to

*negatively*, i. e. its silence could then only be quoted as excluding any point from the list of truths necessary to salvation, when itself had attained a certain degree of completeness. And this perhaps may be one reason why the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture is nowhere expressly affirmed in Scripture itself<sup>1</sup>. The character which our Article justly assigns to the Bible, of “so containing all things necessary to salvation, that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation :”—this character the Bible could not, from the very force of the terms, acquire, until a sufficient portion of its contents had appeared, to include in one place or another every one of such fundamentals. Nor are we sure of this condition having been fulfilled until the appearance of St. John’s Gospel and first Epistle, the latest, probably, of those canonical Scriptures of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. This consideration may serve to account for the comparative rareness of quotations from the New Testament in the writings of the first century ; in the Epistle of St. Clement, for instance, who, while he produces in almost every paragraph some testimony

<sup>1</sup> See note (E) in Appendix.

from the Jewish Scriptures, has only three or four references to the New Testament : where such might be expected, he rather uses to remind men of “ the depths of divine knowledge, which they had looked into <sup>1</sup> ;” of “ the immortal knowledge, whereof they had tasted <sup>2</sup> ;” and of the apostolical examples, which they had seen. Whereas the writers of the following age, Irenæus, Tertullian, and the rest, add to the argument from tradition, on which in itself they lay as much stress as St. Clement, authorities and arguments from the New Testament, much in the manner of controversialists of our own time.

From all this I gather, that in the interval between Clement and Ignatius on the one hand, Irenæus and Tertullian on the other, the canon of the New Testament had first become fixed and notorious, and then the fact had been observed, which is stated in our Article : That every fundamental point of doctrine is contained in the unquestioned books of that canon, taken along with the Hebrew Scriptures. And this observation, being once made, would of course immediately suggest that golden rule, not of the Anglican only, but of the Catholic Church ; That nothing is to be insisted on as a point of faith necessary to salvation, but what is contained in, or

<sup>1</sup> c. 40.

<sup>2</sup> c. 36.

may be proved by, canonical Scripture. At any rate, it is unquestionable that by the time of Irenæus, *i.e.* towards the end of the second century, the fact had been universally recognized, and the maxim thoroughly grounded and incorporated into the system of the Catholic Church <sup>1</sup>.

Reserving thus the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith, we may now, I think, venture to assume, from the nature of the case, the incidental testimony of Scripture, and the direct assertions of the Fathers, that it was an unwritten system which the holy writers spoke of, when they so earnestly recommended the deposit, the commandment, the word heard from the beginning, to the reverential care both of pastors and of all Christian people.

Will it be said, "This is no concern of ours; it may be true in fact, but it yields no practical result; the traditionary system, whatever it was, having long ago passed away, except so far as it has been preserved in inspired writings"? This may be stated, and often is so, but can hardly be proved.

For in the first place, as long as it is only doubtful whether any statement or precept is part of the Apostolic system or no, so long a mind imbued with true devotion will treat that state-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note (F).



ment or precept with reverence, will not rudely reject or scorn it, lest he refuse to entertain an angel unawares. So long, the mere fact of its not being contained in Scripture cannot be felt as a justification for casting it aside, any more than we should venture to disparage it on account of its not being revealed in any particular *book* of Scripture, which we might happen to value above the rest. Although not in Scripture, it may yet be a part of *their* rule, concerning whom the Son of God has declared, "He that heareth you, heareth ME; and he that despiseth you, despiseth ME."

But in truth it may be proved to the satisfaction of any reasonable mind, that not a few fragments yet remain, very precious and sacred fragments, of the unwritten teaching of the first age of the Church. The paramount authority, for example, of the successors of the Apostles in Church government; the threefold order established from the beginning; the virtue of the blessed Eucharist as a commemorative sacrifice; infant Baptism; and, above all, the Catholic doctrine of the Most Holy Trinity, as contained in the Nicene Creed. All these, however surely confirmed from Scripture, are yet ascertainable parts of the primitive, unwritten system, of which we yet enjoy the benefit. If any one ask, how we ascertain them; we answer, By application of the well-known rule, *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*: Anti-

quity, Universality, Catholicity : tests similar to those which jurists are used to apply to the common or unwritten laws of any realm. If a maxim or custom can be traced back to a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary ; if it pervade all the different courts, established in different provinces for the administration of justice ; and, thirdly, if it be generally acknowledged in such sort, that contrary decisions have been disallowed and held invalid : then, whatever the exceptions to it may be, it is presumed to be part and parcel of our common law. On principles exactly analogous, the Church practices and rules above mentioned, and several others, ought, we contend, apart from all Scripture evidence, to be received as traditionary or common laws ecclesiastical. They who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance ; who plead against it the uncertainty of history, the loss or probable corruption of records, the exceptions, deviations, interruptions which have occurred through the temporary prevalence of tyranny, heresy, or schism ; must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this, and of most other old countries.

It is not, therefore, antecedently impossible that a system of tradition, subsidiary to the Scriptures, might yet exist in the commonwealth or city of

GOD. The rest is matter of investigation in each case, whether any given rule, interpretation, or custom, be traditionary in the required sense. But it will not be going too far into particulars, and may help to the understanding and application of the whole argument, if I point out three distinct fields of Christian knowledge, in neither of which can we advance satisfactorily or safely without constant appeal to tradition, such as has been described.

The first is, the *System and Arrangement of fundamental Articles*, so far as they have come down to us systematic and arranged. We, that is, all of the Anglican Church who have had any regular training in theology, are so early taught to trace the Creed in the Scriptures, and to refer at once certain portions of both Testaments to certain high mysteries of the Catholic faith, that it commonly appears to ourselves as though we had learned those mysteries directly from the Scriptures. But there are few, surely, who on careful recollection would not be compelled to acknowledge that the Creed, or some corresponding catechetical instruction, had prepossessed them with these truths, before ever they thought of proving them from Holy Writ. I need hardly remind you of the unquestioned historical fact, that the very Nicene Creed itself, to which perhaps of all *formulae* we are most indebted for our

sound belief in the proper divinity of the Son of God—even this Creed had its origin, not from Scripture, but from tradition. The three hundred Bishops who joined in its promulgation did not profess to have collected it out of the Bible, but simply to express the faith which each of them had found in the Church which he represented, received by tradition from the Apostles<sup>1</sup>. Nor is this any disparagement to Scripture, nor need it excite any alarm for the great fundamental verity itself, which the Creed was meant to assert; any more than it would disparage the works of God, or shake the foundation of our faith in natural religion, were one to affirm that the power and Godhead of the Creator, although unquestionably proveable from the things which are made, would yet have remained unknown to the mass of mankind, but for primitive tradition, or subsequent revelation of it.

The second great subject, on which most of us are unconsciously indebted to the ancient Catholic tradition, is the *Interpretation of Scripture*, especially those parts of it which less obviously relate to the mysteries of the Gospel. Catholic tradition bears upon Scripture interpretation, not only indirectly, by supplying, as just now stated, certain great landmarks of apostolical doctrine, conform-

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note (G).

ably to which the written statements are all to be interpreted ; but also, in numerous cases, directly ; setting the Church's seal, as it were, upon one among many possible expositions of particular passages. For example : how else could we know, with tolerable certainty, that Melchizedek's feast is a type of the blessed Eucharist <sup>1</sup> ? or that the book of Canticles is an allegory, representing the mystical union betwixt CHRIST and his Church <sup>2</sup> ? or that Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is a Name of the second Person in the Most Holy Trinity <sup>3</sup> ? All which interpretations, the moment they are heard, approve themselves to an unprejudiced mind, and must in all likelihood have come spontaneously into many readers' thoughts. But it may be questioned whether we could ever

<sup>1</sup> For this, see S. Cyprian, Ep. 63, p. 149, ed. Fell ; S. Augustin, de Civ. Dei, xviii. 20 ; S. Jerome, Ep. ad Marcellam. t. i. p. 123, ed. Frob. Basil. These, with the distinct acknowledgment in the ancient Roman Liturgy, may perhaps be considered sufficient to represent the sense of the Western Churches. Among the Greeks, S. Chrysostom (on 14 Genesis) clearly implies the same construction. But the reserve maintained by them on all liturgical subjects may account for their comparative silence on this point, even supposing them to have received the same interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> In this I believe all the Fathers who quote that divine Book (and most of them do so often) are agreed.

<sup>3</sup> The disputes on the text, Proverbs viii. 22, at the Nicene Council, are sufficient to prove agreement on this point. It is well known that the Arians alleged it, as it stands in the Septuagint, (ὁ Κύριος ἐκρίσε μὲς), as a proof of the Son's inferiority. The Catholics never disputed the application of the text to our LORD, but denied the deduction from it.

have arrived at more than a plausible conjecture regarding them; but for the constant agreement of the early Church, taking notice every where, in these and the like instances, of the manner in which the Old Testament was divinely accommodated to the wonders of CHRIST's religion.

The third great field of apostolical tradition lies among *practical* matters, the *Discipline, Formularies, and Rites* of the Church of CHRIST: in regard of which, reason tells us that the Church Apostolical must here have had *some* method and system; yet it is evident to the very eye that the New Testament exhibits no such system in form, but only fragments and other indications of one in full operation at the time, and well known to those for whom the Apostles were writing. These fragments being found to coincide with similar but more copious indications in later Church records; consideration also being had of the religious reverence wherewith in those ages every thing primitive was regarded, and of the charitable jealousy of the Churches, watching each other for the purpose of remonstrating against unwarrantable deviations; we need not fear to accept in its fulness, on all such matters, the well-known rule of St. Augustin, which I give in the words of Hooker<sup>1</sup>: "Whatsoever positive order the whole

<sup>1</sup> E. P. vii. v. 3, from Aug. Ep. 108, t. ii. 124.

Church every where doth observe, the same it must needs have received from the very Apostles themselves ; unless, perhaps, some general council were the authors of it." In this kind no one at all versed in Church history can be at a loss for examples of the benefit which the present Church derives from the chain of primitive tradition. Without its aid, humanly speaking, I do not see how we could now retain either real inward communion with our LORD through his Apostles, or the very outward face of God's Church and kingdom among us. Not to dwell on disputable cases : how, but by the tradition and practice of the early Church, can we demonstrate the observance of Sunday as the holiest day, or the permanent separation of the clergy from the people as a distinct order ? or where, except in the primitive Liturgies, a main branch of that tradition, can we find assurance that in the Holy Eucharist we consecrate as the Apostles did, and, consequently, that the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of CHRIST, and the bread which we break the communion of the body of CHRIST<sup>1</sup> ?

<sup>1</sup> Of course, in points of this kind, persons are at liberty, if they will, to content themselves with the common remark, ' Some order ' must have been adopted, and the Church had a right to adopt which ' she pleased.' It is among the privileges reserved for serious, inquiring piety to discern an express will of God, as well in these ecclesiastical laws, as in others more immediately scriptural.

Whether, then, we look to Discipline, to Interpretation, or to Doctrine, every way we see reason to be thankful for many fragments of apostolical practice and teaching, most needful to guide us in the right use of Holy Scripture.

So it is, however, that either from impatience of authority, or dislike of trouble, or excessive dread of Romish error, tradition has become to most of us an unpalatable word, and we love not to allow that in any sense we rest our faith and practice upon it. And, as commonly happens when the mind is first made up, and reasons are to be found afterwards, objections the most contradictory are brought to justify this our determined disregard of antiquity. Sometimes it is urged that the matters involved are so many, so intricate and various, and demand such minute research, that it is out of the question bringing them within the reach of the great body of the clergy, however learned; sometimes, on the contrary, it is maintained, that the points agreed on in the whole ancient Church are obviously so few, there have been such constant discussions and waverings of opinion, that after all there is no such thing as primitive Catholic tradition; what is called such being merely the register of the dictates of that which has proved, on the whole, the strongest and most fashionable party in the



Church<sup>1</sup>. The one statement makes the field so wide, that it is impossible not to lose one's way in it; the other so contracted, that occupying it is no advantage. It is obvious that both objections cannot stand together; and, as might be expected, the truth lies between the two. On the one hand, we are not to imagine that every usage which has prevailed in any part of the Church, every opinion which has been upheld even among orthodox Fathers, claims to have been part of the system of the Apostles. On the other hand, we cannot surely deny such claim to those rules, in which *all* primitive Councils are uniform, those rites and formularies which are found in *all* primitive Liturgies, and those interpretations and principles of interpretation in which *all* orthodox Fathers agree; more especially when they produce them as undoubted and authoritative. Now the genuine canons of the primitive Councils, and the genuine fragments of the primitive Liturgies, are reducible into a small space; even although we go so low down in both as the division of the Eastern and Western Churches, including the six first Councils general, and excluding image-worship and similar corruptions by authority. As far, therefore, as the Councils and Liturgies are concerned, tracing

<sup>1</sup> See Note (H) in Appendix.

the remnant of apostolical tradition need not prove such a very overwhelming task. To establish consent among the Fathers is doubtless a far more laborious process; easiest, however, where it is most desirable, viz. in the great points of faith and worship, as recurring continually, and implied in all other discussions. What remains is chiefly interpretation of Scripture; a precious, inexhaustible mine of primitive knowledge, to such as have the zeal to explore it, but not essential to the fixing of the main outlines. Leaving out, for the present, all such incidental discussions, and confining our view to that which touches the foundation, we shall find that the matters are neither few nor unimportant, which are settled by traditionary evidence within reach of common students. Were they much fewer than they are, and less important, still, as unquestionable relics of the Apostles, a devout and thoughtful mind would prize them for their authors' sake, and for the sake of the lost treasure, whereof they are portions. To forget and disparage them, would be a hard and unnatural thing, like coldly refusing due reverence to the dead. As it is, by the gracious Providence of Almighty God, the points of Catholic consent known by tradition constitute the knots and ties of the whole system; being such as these: the canon of Scripture, the full doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, the oblation and

consecration of the Eucharist, the apostolical Succession ; truths and orders soon enumerated, but such as to extend in vital efficacy through every part of the great scheme of the Church. What, then, if the Church in our time, for the sins of Christians, have lost more or less of that good thing, the perfect apostolical body of government, doctrine, and sacramental grace, committed to St. Paul first, and by him to Timothy ? It is not the less our duty, and by God's grace we will regard it as our high privilege, to keep unwearied watch over what remains, and to preserve it, by the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in us.

3. These concluding words, while they supply an additional reason for extreme jealousy of our precious apostolical relics, open to us the appointed way of guarding what remains, and if one might be so happy, of recovering more : a way not our own, but strictly and properly supernatural. And thus we are conducted to the final point of our enquiry, Whether we, the existing Ministers of the Church, have the same grace dwelling in us, by which Timothy was exhorted to maintain his trust.

Now certainly the obvious meaning of the text is, that the treasure of sound doctrine was to be guarded by the grace of the apostolical succession. For St. Paul speaks of the HOLY GHOST dwelling

*in us, i. e.* in himself and Timothy ; and how it had passed from him to Timothy had been expressed a few verses before ; “ I will that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.” The Church of England, you will remember, supplies full warrant for this interpretation ; by directing the same phrase to be solemnly repeated at the consecration of every Bishop ; “ Remember that thou stir up the grace of God *which is given thee by this imposition of our hands ;*” and also where, in ordaining a Bishop or Presbyter, the solemn words are spoken, “ Receive the HOLY GHOST.” Our Church, therefore, does not teach us to consider the HOLY GHOST dwelling in St. Paul and Timothy as properly miraculous, a gift of extraordinary grace ; but as their portion of that SPIRIT which was to be poured out on all Apostles, and successors of the Apostles, for ever. It was not what is commonly called miraculous, yet it was altogether supernatural. For no natural or acquired virtue or talent, though it might be called the *gift* of the HOLY GHOST, would ever be designated as the HOLY GHOST himself abiding in a man. Neither was it the preventing or assisting grace, common to all Christian persons ; for it was given to Timothy in particular by imposition of St. Paul’s hands. It could only be, what the Church interprets it ; apostolical, or episcopal grace.

Apostolical, then, or episcopal grace is by God's ordinance the guardian of sound doctrine; the SPIRIT abiding in Timothy is to watch incessantly the deposit or trust of divine truth left in his charge: and where the one, the succession, fails, there, as this verse would lead us to expect, and as all church history proves, the other, the truth of doctrine, is immediately in imminent jeopardy.

Here, then, we seem to have arrived at one cardinal point at least, whereby we may shape our course in times and emergencies more than usually perplexing. We are to look before all things to the integrity of the good deposit, the orthodox faith, the creed of the Apostolical Church, guaranteed to us by Holy Scripture, and by consent of pure antiquity. Present opportunities of doing good; external quietness, peace, and order; a good understanding with the temporal and civil power; the love and co-operation of those committed to our charge;—these, and all other pastoral consolations, must be given up, though it be with a heavy heart, rather than we should yield one jot or one tittle of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

And whereas the dangers to that faith vary according to the differences of times, interests, and opinions; and sometimes the scriptural, sometimes the traditionary safeguards of it appear to

be more immediately threatened ; both must be watched with jealous and impartial care, since comparative neglect of either is sure to be attended with ill consequences to both. Thus the reverence of the Latin Church for tradition, being applied unscrupulously, and without the necessary check from Scripture, to opinions and practices of a date comparatively recent, has led a large portion of Christendom to disuse and contempt, not of Scripture only, but of that real and sure tradition, which they might and ought to have religiously depended upon. On the other hand, is there not reason to fear that the Holy Scriptures themselves are fast losing reverence, through the resolute defiance of tradition, which some affect, in conformity, as they suppose, with the maxim, that the Bible only is the religion of Protestants ? Surely, it is no rare nor unnatural result, if such as are trained to this principle, being left, as some one has said, alone with their Bibles<sup>1</sup>, use their supposed liberty of interpretation, first in explaining away the mysterious meaning, and afterwards in lowering or evading the supernatural authority, of the very Scriptures which at first they deferred to exclusively. And no wonder ; since among the traditionary truths which they are taught to undervalue is the canon of Scripture itself, and the principle also, that fundamental articles of

<sup>1</sup> Hooker, E. P. Pref. vii. 7.

belief must be sought for in Scripture. In short, the sacred building is so divinely, though invisibly cemented, that for aught we know it is impossible to remove any portion, either of scriptural or traditional truth, without weakening the whole arch. We, to whom the whole is committed, under the most solemn of all pledges, and with the actual gift of the all-sufficient SPIRIT to aid us in redeeming that pledge ; let us, above all things, beware of the presumption of selecting for ourselves among the truths and laws of the Most High, *which* we will retain, and *which* we may venture to dispense with.

In the next place, let us beware of Novelty : novelty, I mean, as compared with the apostolic age ; not the mere appearance of novelty as compared with the current notions of our time. For it is self-evident, that if in any age or country any portion of apostolical truth be lost, whenever it is revived it must for the time look new ; and its maintainers will have to contend with the prejudice which constantly waits on the disturbers of things established. Not novelty, therefore, relative to us, but novelty relative to the primitive and original standard, is the thing above all to be deprecated in the whole of theology, by whatever plausible air of originality, ingenuity, completeness, it may seem to recommend itself.

Observe under what a fearful penalty, in a

warning parallel to that of the text, St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, discourages every intrusion of speculative doctrine. The apostacy, he tells them, will come ; the wicked one shall be revealed, actuated by Satan, to deceive them that perish ; “ on whom God will send strong delusion, “ that they may believe a lie.” And then he proceeds, “ Wherefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold “ the traditions which ye have been taught, whether “ by word or our epistle.” Is not this equivalent to saying, that whoever is studious of novelty in religion is in a way to take part with Antichrist ; that the only security against him and the spirit which prepares the way for him is to hold the apostolical doctrine, whether taught in word or in writing ; and to exclude all additions, however tempting to human ingenuity and love of system, however acutely they may appear to be reasoned out and to fall in with allowed principles ?

Had this rule been faithfully kept, it would have preserved the Church just as effectually from transubstantiation on the one hand, as from the denial of CHRIST's real presence on the other hand. The two errors in their original are but rationalism in different forms ; endeavours to explain away, and bring nearer to the human intellect, that which had been left thoroughly mysterious both by Scripture and tradition. They would both turn the attention of men from the real life-giving



miracle to mere metaphysical or grammatical subtilities, such as our Fathers never knew.

Observe, again, the phraseology of the Apostle, how it is formed throughout upon the supposition that in the substance of the faith there is no such thing as improvement, discovery, evolution of new truths ; none of those processes, which are the pride of human reason and knowledge, find any place here. Here the one thing needful is to “*retain* the mystery of the faith ;” to “*abide* in the good instruction whereto we have already attained ;” to “*teach* no *other* doctrine ;” to be on our guard against those who resist the truth under pretence of “*proceeding* further,” assured that such, although they seem to be “*ever learning*,” shall never be able to “*come to the knowledge of the truth* ;” they will “*proceed*” indeed, but it will be from bad to worse<sup>1</sup>. All these cautions, and others no less fearful, the HOLY SPIRIT has left for our admonition, directed not against any positive wrong opinion, but in general against the fatal error of treating theology like any human science, as a subject in which every succeeding age might be expected to advance on the former<sup>2</sup>.

Nor is the warning less important, nor the application to our times less certain, where

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 9 ; iv. 6 ; i. 3. 2 Tim. iii. 7, 9, 13. Προσκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note (I).

Timothy is enjoined<sup>1</sup> to "keep that committed to his charge, turning away from profane, empty verbal discussions, and oppositions of knowledge, falsely so called." The allusion was probably in the first instance to the low-minded empirical system of the Gnostics. But the words are not much less appropriate to that which may be called the *Nominalism* of our days; I mean the habit of resolving the high mysteries of the faith into mere circumstances of language, methods of speaking adapted to our weak understanding, but with no real counterpart in the nature of things. Whoever takes this line must needs hold the tradition of antiquity cheap, since it is based altogether on the supposition which he rejects as unphilosophical. Thus slighting tradition, and explaining away Scripture, there is no saying what pernicious heresy such a theorist may not fall into, if not happily guarded against himself by feelings and prejudices more reasonable than all his reasoning. Meantime the warning of Scripture is express: that they who "profess" such things may be expected to "err concerning the faith." And it is plain that if at any time either the high places of the Church, or the schools of theological knowledge, should be left in such keeping, the guardians of the good deposit would be bound to

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

direct especial attention that way, and not permit things to pass away, as in a dream, before men are aware.

This leads directly to the recollection of a third danger, to which the Church seems especially exposed at this moment; I mean, that which is commonly entitled *Erastianism*; the Church betraying to the civil power more or less of the good deposit, which our LORD had put exclusively into her hands. This is a form of compromise with the world, for which no occasion was given by the circumstances of the Apostles: a trial peculiar to times like ours, when the governors of the world profess to have become the servants of our LORD and of his CHRIST. We cannot therefore look in the New Testament for literal instruction how to behave with regard to this delicate and dangerous part of our duty. The Gospel affording no express rules or precedents, we are thrown first upon the many analogous cases which the inspired records of the Jewish history supply; and then upon the conduct and determinations of the Catholic Church, in those centuries of her establishment during which the primitive system existed in something like integrity, to guide her demeanour in her altered condition. Yet, undoubtedly, the general rule, Keep the deposit, affects our relations to the civil authorities more immediately than persons unversed in church

matters might imagine. If we are to understand by "the deposit" the faith once for all committed to Christians; and if the apostolical succession be the appointed guard of that faith; and if the charter of the succession, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you," convey the power of church government as well as that of administering sacraments; then every undue sacrifice of the power of Church government to any earthly power is an infringement of the charter, and renders the deposit of the faith less secure. For the sake, therefore, of the very foundation of sound doctrine, and not only for the sake of peace and order in the Church, ecclesiastical government, as well as the custody of sacraments, should be jealously reserved in those hands to which CHRIST originally entrusted it. Nor do I see how it can be less than a sacred duty, however painful and to human eyes unavailing, to protest, if we can do no more, against unauthorized intrusions on church government, as every one will readily allow we ought to protest against unauthorized administration of sacraments<sup>1</sup>.

Such being the object for which we are set in defence, and such the enemies with whom we have to contend; such also the heavenly assistant,

<sup>1</sup> See note (K) in Appendix.

dwelling in us and fighting on our side ; it cannot be hard to perceive with what dispositions we ought to address ourselves to that holy warfare. It will not do to shrink from responsibility, or to be over scrupulous in calculating immediate results. Once let us be reasonably assured that we are in the way of our duty, really keeping the good deposit ; and then, to use the words of the Prophet, we may "set our faces like a flint, and need not be ashamed." Then, as often as misgivings and alarms come over us, we must "stir up the grace of God which is in us by imposition of apostolic hands." For "God hath not given us a SPIRIT of cowardice<sup>1</sup>, but of power, and of love, and of brotherly correction and reproof ;" a SPIRIT that brings with Him an invisible but real *power*, to open and shut the kingdom of heaven in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST ; a SPIRIT of never-failing *love* and *charity* to men's souls, to guide us in the exercise of that more than human power ; and, lastly, a SPIRIT of kind and fatherly, yet, if need be, uncompromising and fearless *rebuke*.

Let us be only true to our sacred trust ; let us put everything else by for the sake of handing down the whole counsel of God, our good deposit, entire as we received it : and who knows but we

may by God's mercy be made instrumental in saving the English church from ruin not unlike that which has fallen on Ephesus, Smyrna, or Sardis? At any rate, the Church Catholic, in one country or another, we are sure, will survive and triumph. As of old she has stood before kings and governors, and it turned to her for a testimony, so now blessed are they whom divine Providence shall choose and enable worthily to support her cause against popular delusion and tyranny. We, indeed, as Priests of the second order, are but under-labourers in that most holy cause. Yet the least and lowest among us may look for his share of the blessing, as he has undoubtedly his share of the burthen and of the peril. Is there not a hope, that by resolute self-denial and strict and calm fidelity to our ordination vows, we may not only aid in preserving that which remains, but also may help to revive in some measure, in this or some other portion of the Christian world, more of the system and spirit of the apostolical age? New truths, in the proper sense of the word, we neither can nor wish to arrive at. But the monuments of antiquity may disclose to our devout perusal much that will be to this age new, because it has been mislaid or forgotten; and we may attain to a light and clearness, which we now dream not of, in our comprehension of the faith and discipline of CHRIST. We may

succeed beyond what humanly appears possible in rekindling a primitive zeal among those who shall be committed to our charge. Even as Abraham, neglecting all earthly objects, "taught his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment;" and one part of his reward was, that "GOD would not hide from Abraham the thing which he did<sup>1</sup>:" another, that he was made the glorious and favoured instrument for transmitting divine truth through a fallen and corrupt age.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 17—19.

## APPENDIX.

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### NOTE A, p. 11.

Philipp. i. 15—18. The construction here adopted varies a little from that commonly received. It may be as well, therefore, briefly to state the exact import of it, and the grounds on which it is preferred. It supposes that the words, κηρύσσειν and καταγγέλλειν, are not used here in their technical or official sense, in which they answer to the English word *preaching*, taken as in our version of the Bible, but that they represent the occasional though providential result of St. Paul's imprisonment having been made the subject of conversation at Rome. Some spoke of it as faithful Christians; others, the Judaizers more especially, as jealous enemies of Christianity: both became in a certain sense heralds of CHRIST, the one sincerely and intentionally speaking the word, as he says just above, the more boldly for his bonds; the other occasionally, without any purpose of their own. Clearly the words will bear this construction. And the ancient interpreters unite in denying the applicability of St. Paul's expressions to heretical teaching. So Tertullian, adv.



Marcion, lib. v. c. 20, having quoted the passage from St. Paul, remarks, that "this was the natural place for excepting to the substance of the preaching complained of, had any variation of that kind been the cause of this great diversity of feeling. But the Apostle states the irregularity to exist in the motives and tempers of men only, not in their standards of mysterious doctrine. His manner of speaking shows, that with whatever purpose they preached, it was one GOD whom they preached, and one CHRIST. 'Therefore,' he adds, 'it is nothing to me, whether in pretence or in truth CHRIST be preached'; because it was still the same who was preached, whether with pretended or with real faithfulness. It was in respect of their good faith in preaching that he used the phrase '*in truth*,' not in respect of the rule of doctrine itself, which they preached. For the rule was all the time one; but some had genuine, *i. e.* simple good faith in delivering it; others were too full of subtilties." Again, it appears that in St. Cyprian's time some had argued from this passage of St. Paul in favour of allowing heretical baptism. St. Cyprian's reply is, "He was not speaking of heretics, nor of their baptism. We cannot show that he has here laid down any rule pertaining thereto. He was speaking of Christians walking, some disorderly, and contrary to Church discipline; some, through fear of God, preserving evangelical verity. . . . Now, it is one thing for those within the Church to speak in the name of CHRIST; another thing for those without" (*i. e.* heretics) "to baptize in the name of CHRIST." Ep. ad Jubaian. p. 204, ed. Fell. comp. Firmilian, ad Cyprian. p. 226. See also S. Chrys. *in loco*, who agrees with the preceding Fathers in not interpreting the passage of heretics, but is more express than they in supposing, that it was some sort of formal preaching of which St.

Paul complains. It seems, however, a hard supposition, that any should have literally preached the truth of CHRIST, and exposed themselves to persecution, for the sake of exasperating the emperor against St. Paul. In this, therefore, it may be excusable to depart from St. Chrysostom, and rather to understand *κηρύσσειν* and *καταγγέλλειν*, when applied to the adversaries, in a secondary sense, of the pains taken by them to spread the report of the Apostle's imprisonment, which they considered a check and discredit to the Gospel.

NOTE B, p. 15.

The validity of this conjecture may be best estimated by simply comparing the passage in the original with the preceding and subsequent verses :—

Ἦμεν γάρ ποτε καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνόητοι, ἀπειθεῖς, πλανώμενοι,  
δουλεύοντες ἐπιθυμίαις καὶ ἡδοναῖς ποικίλαις, ἐν κακίᾳ καὶ  
φθόνῳ διάγοντες, στυγητοὶ, μισοῦντες ἀλλήλους.

Ὅτε δὲ ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιланθρωπία ἐπεφάνη τοῦ  
σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ΘΕΟΥ,

οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων τῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὧν ἐποιήσαμεν ἡμεῖς,  
ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸν αὐτοῦ ἔλεον ἔσωσεν ἡμᾶς,

διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας, καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως ΠΝΕΥ-  
ΜΑΤΟΣ ἈΓΙΟΥ,

οὗ ἐξέχεεν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς πλουσίως, διὰ ἸΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ  
τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν

ἵνα, δικαιωθέντες τῇ ἐκείνου χάριτι,

κληρονόμοι γενώμεθα κατ' ἐλπίδα ζωῆς αἰωνίου.

Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος· καὶ περὶ τούτων βούλομαι σε διαβεβαιοῦ-  
σθαι, ἵνα φροντίζωσι καλῶν ἔργων προϊστασθαι οἱ πεπιστευ-  
κότες τῷ ΘΕΩ.

## NOTE C, p. 17.

The only other notion of the *παράκλησις*, or apostolical deposit, which can at all approve itself to one versed in Scripture language, is that which would explain it of *persons* rather than of *doctrines*; the flock which was given him, the souls committed to his charge: according to the use of the word in the Acts of the Apostles: "They *commended* their new converts to the LORD on whom they had believed;" and St. Paul "*commended* the Ephesian elders to God and the word of his grace."

But, besides the reasons above given for interpreting the place rather of doctrine, it may be asked whether the very form of expression, Keep the deposit, is such as would have been probably adopted, had pastoral duties been only or chiefly intended. It seems to cast upon the person so admonished rather too much of absolute responsibility, considering that, after all, the success of the pastoral care must depend chiefly on those who are the objects of it. In short, it is a mode of interpreting too much in unison with the overstrained exaggerated demands of our day; in which it has become a general custom to speak as if every thing depended on the personal qualities of the clergy; to blame them altogether for failure, and in consequence to attribute to them over much of the blessings, with which the ALMIGHTY from time to time may be pleased to visit His Church.

## NOTE D, p. 24.

Iren. adv. Hær. iii. 4. "Non oportet adhuc quærere apud alios veritatem, quam facile est ab Ecclesia sumere; cum Apostoli, quasi in depositarium dives, plenissime in

eam contulerint omnia quæ sint veritatis: uti omnis, quicumque velit, sumat ex ea potum vitæ. Hæc est enim vitæ introitus; omnes autem reliqui fures sunt et latrones. . . . Quid autem si neque Apostoli quidem Scripturas reliquissent nobis? Nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant Ecclesias? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum, eorum qui in CHRISTUM credunt, sine charta vel atramento scriptam habentes per SPIRITUM in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes. . . . Hanc fidem qui sine literis crediderunt, quantum ad sermonem nostrum, barbari sunt; quantum autem ad sententiam, et consuetudinem, et conversationem, propter fidem perquam sapientissimi sunt, et placent Deo, conversantes in omni iustitia et castitate et sapientia. Quibus si aliquis annuntiaverit ea quæ ab hæreticis adinventa sunt, proprio sermone eorum colloquens, statim concludentes aures, longo longius fugient, ne audire quidem sustinentes blasphemum colloquium."

NOTE E, p. 29.

This is not said without recollection of such texts as St. John v. 49; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. But it is plain that both these passages speak of the *Scriptures of the Old Testament only*; and therefore, if understood exclusively, prove too much. The latter, indeed, adds a general remark on the use of *all* Scripture; that being, as it is, all alike divinely inspired, every part of it has its use, for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and must help to the perfection and entire furnishing of the man of God unto all good works. But St. Paul does not there affirm that all truths

necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, any more than he affirms all to be contained in each separate portion of Scripture.

These being the passages commonly adduced to prove by Scripture the sufficiency of Scripture, and being evidently inadequate to the purpose, we cannot be very wrong in rather referring to Tradition, as for the Sacred Canon itself, so also for this rule concerning it; That it contains or implies whatever points of faith are necessary to eternal salvation.

NOTE F, p. 31.

Not to travel at present beyond the writings of Irenæus himself, the following might be cited as passages clearly implying this doctrine. In b. ii. c. 46, he thus lays down the rule to be adopted in interpreting Scripture parables:—"A sound, and safe, and religious mind, and one really bent on truth:—whatsoever things God has left within our province, and subjected to our knowledge, those such a mind will diligently study to the uttermost, and in the same continually advance, by daily exercise rendering the acquisition of knowledge easy to itself. Now these things are, first, such as come under the cognizance of our sight; secondly, whatsoever things are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of the Divine Scriptures. And therefore the parables, or dark passages, ought always to be expounded consistently with those which are clear." Is it not plain that Irenæus is here dividing the grounds of human knowledge into two classes, the one of Sight and the other of Faith; and that his definition of the latter is, "such things as are openly and unambiguously uttered in the very words of Divine Scrip-

ture"? Presently after, he compares those who leave express Scripture for doubtful and fanciful theories of figurative language, to the foolish virgins, who "being freely and in plain terms invited to meet the bridegroom, lose their opportunity, and are shut out of the marriage feast, while they are seeking light from those who busy themselves in the dark with forced explanations of parables." Again, in the very passage above quoted, p. 24, where he speaks most highly of real apostolical tradition, he clearly intimates that the Scriptures are parallel to it in substance. The mere question, If we had not the Scriptures, must we not follow tradition? implies that, having the Scriptures, we have the substance of truths necessary to salvation, and so far depend not at all on tradition. The manner, again, in which Irenæus every where opposes the heretics to the Scriptures, evinces that they were constantly and unhesitatingly appealed to by the orthodox, as the foundation, without going further. E. g. lib. ii. c. 54. "These are not fitter guides than the Scriptures; nor does it become us, leaving the writings of the LORD and Moses, and the other prophets, heralds of the truth, to rest our faith on these, whose teaching has nothing sound, but is full of distraction and incoherency."

#### NOTE G, p. 35.

The following is the statement of St. Athanasius; de Decr. Nic. Synod. c. iii.: t. i. 210. ed. Bened:

Ὡς ἐφιλονέκουν ἀσεβοῦντες, καὶ θεομαχεῖν ἐπεχείρουν, τὰ μὲν λεγόμενα παρ' αὐτῶν ἀσεβείας ἦν μεστά· οἱ δὲ συνελθόντες ἐπίσκοποι· ἦσαν δὲ πλεον ἢ ἑλασσον τριακόσιοι· πρῶως καὶ φιλανθρώπως ἀπήτουν αὐτοὺς, περὶ ὧν

ἔλεγον διδόναι λόγον καὶ ἀποδείξεις εὐσεβεῖς. ὥς δὲ καὶ μόνον φθεγγόμενοι κατεγινώσκοντο, καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς διεμάχοντο, πολλὴν ὀρῶντες τῆς ἑαυτῶν αἰρέσεως τὴν ἀπορίαν, ἀχανεῖς μὲν ἔμενον οὗτοι, καὶ διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς ὁμολογουν τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ κακοδοξίᾳ αὐτῶν αἰσχύνην· οἱ τοίνυν ἐπίσκοποι λοιπὸν ἀνελόντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐπινοηθέντα ῥήματα, οὕτως ἐξέθεντο κατ' αὐτῶν τὴν ὑγιαίνουσαν καὶ ἐκκλησιαστικὴν πίστιν.

“The Arians being forward in their impiety, and taking the offensive, and uttering words full of ungodliness, the Bishops who had assembled, being in number three hundred, more or less, quietly asked of them to give some explanation and proof of their affirmations, consistent with piety. But when upon their own shewing they were convicted, and were at variance with each other, finding themselves much at a loss in maintaining their heresy, the result was, on the one part, silence, and an implied confession of shame for their perverse opinion; on the other, the Bishops rejected the expressions devised by them, and proceeded to enunciate against them the sound faith, *the faith of the Church from the beginning.*”

The orthodox therefore at Nice argued indeed largely from Scripture, but it was in refutation of the Arian subtilties, rather than for establishment of the Catholic faith. For the latter purpose, they were content to appeal to tradition.

NOTE H, p. 40.

Chillingworth, Religion of Protestants, c. vii. p. 1. s. 56. “The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. Whatever else they believe besides

it, and the plain irrefragable indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion : but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption. I for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with mine own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, *Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age ; traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found. No tradition but only of Scripture can derive itself from the fountain, but may be plainly proved either to have been brought in in such an age after Christ, or that in such an age it was not in. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only for any considering men to build upon.* It is melancholy, but instructive, to reflect that the writer of these sentences is credibly reported to have been an Arian, or near it, before he died.

NOTE I, p. 48.

The sort of improvement which we are encouraged to hope for, is traced out by Vincentius Lirinensis, Commonitor. c. 22 : — “ O Timothee, O sacerdos, O tractator, O doctor, si te divinum munus idoneum fecerit, ingenio, exercitatione, doctrina, esto spiritalis tabernaculi Bezaleel, pretiosas divini dogmatis gemmas exculpe, fide-



liter coapta, adorna sapienter, adjice splendorem, gratiam, venustatem. Intelligatur te exponente illustrius quod ante obscurius credebatur. Per te posteritas intellectum gratuletur, quod ante vetustas non intellectum venerabatur. Eadem tamen quæ didicisti doce; ut cum dicas nove, non dicas nova." Compare Bp. Butler, Anal. part ii. c. iii. vol. ii. p. 249. Oxford, 1807.

NOTE K, p. 51.

This part of the argument can hardly be stated, under the present circumstances of our Church, without giving rise to the grave practical question, What is the line to be taken by those clergymen, who feel serious objections, in conscience and principle, to the course of ecclesiastical legislation now in progress: who consider our Saviour's charter to be violated by the admission of a body constituted as the British Parliament now is to legislate for the Church of Christ, especially without controul or authority from the Bishops synodically assembled? Under such persuasion, can we help regarding the laws so passed, or hereafter to be passed, as having in themselves no canonical force, and only then claiming the submission of CHRIST'S ministers and people, when enforced on us severally by command of our respective diocesans? Or can we avoid entertaining fears, that the whole may amount in God's sight to the concurrence of the Church in a great national sin? All this, over and above the many grave exceptions which, as not a few of us think, may reasonably be alleged against the *details* of the proposed reform, can it be wrong to take such opportunities as we have of respectfully recording our humble but

deliberate protest against proceedings, in our judgment so very objectionable?

The present writer is well aware of the insignificancy of such expressions of individual opinion; and also of the danger of appearing undutiful to those whom he is bound most on earth to honour and revere. But he has observed in several quarters a disposition to interpret the silence of the parochial clergy as implying approbation of the measures in question: and he fears that such supposed acquiescence may tend to neutralize our efforts on future occasions. These feelings, he hopes, may plead his excuse for being anxious to disavow on his own behalf, and as far as he may venture to do so, on behalf of the clergy in general, all responsibility on the subject. The principles on which we might well be supposed averse to the course which has been adopted were sufficiently manifested three years ago in our remonstrances against the Irish Church Bill. Whatever has been now done, for good or for evil, the praise or blame of it must belong entirely to our governors. Our part has been merely that of soldiers, laying down their arms at the command of their superior officers. Nor can it in fairness be so construed as to preclude us hereafter from asserting church principles, as often as we feel that our duty calls on us to do so.

THE END.

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